

THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

A POPULAR PAPER WEEKLY FOR PLEASURE & PROFIT

Vol. II.

BEADLE AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
William St., corner of Platt.

NEW YORK, MARCH 18, 1871.

TERMS: \$3.00 per Annum in advance.
\$1.00 for Four Months.

No. 53.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by BEADLE AND COMPANY, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.



"Before high Heaven I swear you shall never stand at the altar as Bertrand Haighte's wife!"

OATH-BOUND; OR, THE MASKED BRIDE.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
Author of "The Shadowed Heart," "The Scarlet Crescent," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST TOKEN OF THE STORM.

THE last brilliant tints of an autumn sunset were streaming brightly over the lawn at Edenwilde, lighting up with richly warm glories the spacious mansion, whose many windows caught the sunlight reflecting it again in a blaze of molten gold.

Far off, to the west, the Hudson river was sweeping by, a veritable belt of flame, under that orange sky; eastward, skirting the rear of Edenwilde, were the solemn Highlands, crowned with their glowing, frost-touched jewels.

Before the front piazza, all white pillared and floored, and from whence Crystal Roscoe was watching the lights and shadows as they flickered and swayed on the close-cut, velvet greenward, stretched the large lawn, adorned by far-spreading trees, and low, bushy shrubs, with here and there a gleaming marble Ceres or Diana, and a dainty Niobe, all sprinkled from the spray of the shelled fountain, that tinkled and showered over the bright green mosses and pink-lipped sea-shells.

It was a vast, glorious inheritance, this that belonged to the proud, wealthy Roscoes for many a past generation, and fair Crystal Roscoe, while gazing upon the beauties of the old ancestral home, felt her heart beat anew, as she remembered she was a Roscoe.

And a fit representative she was; with her aristocratic beauty of face and form, no less than of mind and heart.

As she sat thus, her white dress lying in thick, graceful negligence around her, and a scarlet silken shawl thrown over one shoulder, her beautiful dark-brown eyes resting in admiration on the fair landscape, you would have stopped to gaze again at the satin-brown hair, without ripple or wave to mar its ivory smoothness; at the earnest, honest, withal laughing, eyes, that held the true Roscoe self-importance.

She was fair, and noble, and brave, and true, and all this nobility she had promised to Bertrand Haighte, whose Tower walls rose grim and gray, just over the sunny-bosomed river.

Bertrand Haighte! It was he of whom she was thinking, as she mutely caressed the betrothal-ring on her dainty finger; dreaming of the blissful days they had spent since he had won her, while the spring green was just blooming; wondering if the future

could hold more of joy than the past; and trying to imagine if Mrs. Haighte, of The Towers, would be less happy than the angels.

Her sweet thoughts were bringing a scarlet bloom to her pale cheeks—Crystal was white and colorless as the Psyche over her toilette bureau; a clear, cold, elegant fairness, a birthright of the Roscoes—and she started suddenly as the distinct sounds of a galloping horse's feet came echoing up the entrance avenue from the road. She thought it might be Bertrand, and she sprang to her feet, the light of love's welcoming in her eyes.

It was not Bertrand, nor was it any one Crystal had ever seen before; and she stood astonished, to see the stranger riding up to the foot of the high marble flight of steps.

It was a woman—or rather a girl, of nineteen or twenty, perhaps. A dark, magnificent woman, whose midnight hair hung to her waist, in a succession of loose, heavy curls.

Her eyes were large, haughty in their expression, and dark as a thunder-cloud; and somehow, as Crystal stood watching the stranger dismount, her scarlet shawl flung gracefully over her shoulder, her slight form drawn up in surprise, she associated those wondrous, flashing eyes, as, for a moment, they rested full on her, with a lightning-charged storm-cloud, which, at a moment's warning, would spread instant desolation around.

She thought that, then forgot it in her surprise.

Very self-possessed the stranger ascended the steps, and bowed to Crystal.

"This is Miss Roscoe, I think."

"I am Miss Crystal. My sister is not at home."

"Miss Crystal I wish to see. I was not aware there was an elder child."

She paused, and looked keenly at Crystal, who, in her most frigid tones, addressed her.

"I can not imagine what you wish of either Hellice—Miss Roscoe—or myself."

The lady drew near her, and fixed her flashing eyes upon her.

"I am as well aware as yourself that you consider me an intruder; perhaps I am; perhaps you will regard me your best friend one day, strange as my introduction to you is. I came to see you, Miss Crystal, on solemnly important business. May I ask you to invite me within?"

She spoke with a courtly grace that denoted her refinement and education; and as she concluded, she handed Crystal a card.

"It is my name," she said, briefly. Crystal read the address. It was a name she had never heard before, nor was ever likely to forget, so unique and melodious was it.

"UNDINE DEL ROSE."

"I have never heard of you, Miss Del Rose. There surely must be a mistake. There are never visitors at Edenwilde except invited guests or friends."

She was as freezing as an iceberg, but the stranger did not resent the remark.

"As I said, I desire to see you, Miss Crystal Roscoe, and as you do not design to extend to me even the slightest courtesies of hospitality, let me at once inform you why I am here. Miss Crystal, you are engaged to be married to Bertrand Haighte?"

Crystal flushed indignantly at the sudden question, asked so sharply.

"I can't see that it interests you, Miss Del Rose."

"But it does. I have come to Edenwilde to ascertain if the rumor be true; because, if it be true—"

She paused, fixing her penetrating eyes on Crystal's sweet face.

"And if it be?"

"Then, my mission will be one of bitter weepfulness to you, Miss Crystal."

A sudden throb of her heart told her this strange woman's visit was an omen; a sickening shiver came over her, that the bright eyes opposite to her did not fail to see.

"Will you tell me? I must know, even if I ride to The Towers and have it from his own lips."

"I see no reason for your troubling Mr. Haighte. I also know of no reason why I should deny that which is an honor to me, or would be to any woman. Yes, Miss Del Rose, I am betrothed to Bertrand Haighte. I wear this ring, that he gave me; and one month from to-day sees me his bride."

Crystal spoke quietly, haughtily, and then turned away, as if, all the required information being given, she deemed herself at liberty to withdraw.

A deathly ashiness overspread Undine Del Rose's dark face, and she reached forth her hands toward the pale, frightened girl.

"Oh, has he dared! has he dared! Miss Crystal, he dare not marry you; he dare not marry any one—oh, God! forgive him that he has cast this blight over your young life! And yet, oh, my poor Miss Crystal, thank Him you are spared the horror of becoming his wife—oh, the awful, terrible words, BERTRAND HAIGHTE'S WIFE!"

As she finished speaking, she bowed her head on her hands, while Crystal stood, like a statue, staring at her.

"Explain yourself! Remember Mr.

Haighte is very near and dear to me, and that whatever you say to injure him, hurts me as well. Remember he occupies a position of influence and trust, and is known throughout the State for a noble, upright gentleman. Remember I know him intimately, better than you can."

She had regained her composure, and her brown eyes were steadily regarding the handsome, passionate face before her.

"Better than—"

The stranger checked herself, then began, almost fiercely:

"I tell you he dare not, he can not, he shall not make you his wife! Before high Heaven I swear you shall never stand at the altar as Bertrand Haighte's wife!"

"Such language betrays your purpose, woman. At first I thought you a lady, for your language and gentle demeanor seemed to declare so. I was startled by your boldness and troubled at your words. But now, Undine Del Rose, whoever or whatever you are, I fear you no longer. Such foolish words belong to but idiots—or jealous women!"

Crystal drew her shawl more closely around her; but the stranger grew more excited at her coolness.

"I—I am idiot! I jealous of him! Oh, would I might speak the secret that is locked here."

She struck wildly against her breast.

"I am not anxious to know your secrets. I wish to be excused now."

Crystal bowed.

"One moment, I beg, while I tell you to prove me—prove me! Go tell your betrothed husband Undine Del Rose was here, and he'll ask who she is! But tell him these three words—whisper them in the ear of the man who, though not bound by word or deed to any living woman but yourself, the man, who, though free as the air he breathes, dare not marry you. Crystal Roscoe, whisper to him, I say, these words—and by the way he hears them, judge for yourself. But, if the world stands, and you live, you'll never see the day that calls you Bertrand Haighte's wife!"

She leaned over, and murmured the fatal test words in Crystal's ear. Then, with no further adieu, rode away as she had come.

Crystal watched the flying figure, and noted that it took the direction of The Towers.

She sat down on the rustic settee, her heart fluttering, her thoughts wild and unsettled.

What did it all mean? Who was this mysterious "Undine Del Rose," with her ominous news, her tragic oath? What did she know of Bertrand Haighte?

But, despite her brave putting of the questions to herself, her heart was sinking with fright and nervous alarm; and she grew chillier than the cool evening air alone made her. So she wrapped her shawl more tightly about her, and still sat, waiting and

thinking; the while those three significant words kept ringing in her ears.

Bertrand was bound to no one, yet was not at liberty to marry!

It was strange, at least; and passing bold in this witch-faced, elfin-locked Undine Del Rose, if no more!

Carriage-wheels were approaching, and Crystal arose to greet her sister and father on their return from the city.

"Why, Crissy, you're looking paler than usual, a sort of scared pale. Has anything occurred?"

General Roscoe, a fine, gray-headed, portly old gentleman, drew his youngest born to his side.

She tried to smile.

"A little lonely, papa, that is all. I expected Bertrand, but he did not come."

"And we just passed a lady riding up the avenue to The Towers. A glorious face, dark and witching as an elf's. Hellice, my dear, shall I assist you?"

A tall, graceful woman, not unlike Crystal's self, came up the broad marble steps, loaded with wee packages.

"Oh, these tormenting bridal favors, Crystal! Papa fairly scolded me to-day at Stewart's, while I was deciding between white plush or blue velvet buttons for your robe de chambre."

Her merry laugh struck a strange chill to her sister's heart. Already the name of bridal favors sent a sickening shiver over her.

"Then, there were the kids. I selected a dozen boxes, Crystal, and papa whispered to me, did you never wear your hands uncovered after you were to be married?"

Crystal tried to laugh, but her eyes betrayed to the loving sister the fact of some griefs; and, unloading the parcels, she went up to Crystal, with all the decisiveness of her character.

"Look you, Crystal, in my eyes. I see that something has grieved you; you will tell me?"

And then she poured her strange story in Hellice's ear.

Hellice Roscoe was not a woman who would laugh at such a story; nor would she seek to hide any trouble she herself felt. She was straightforward, honest, brave-hearted; a woman to fight a difficulty rather than go around and avoid it.

So now, when Crystal sat watching and waiting for the words that were coming—and Hellice was her oracle—Hellice was looking down in her sister's eyes, with a sad, pitying light in her own.

"Crystal, child, there must be some sort of a foundation to warrant this stranger's assertions. What it may be, we must find out. Your first duty toward proving her a fraud or a truth is, to faithfully repeat what you have told me to Bertrand. There, he is coming up the front-stairs now!"

CHAPTER II.

STRICKEN.

HE was a young man, was Bertrand Haighte, with a merry, joyous light in his eyes, and a quick, firm spring in his tread as he walked; a tall, well-built young fellow, with square shoulders, proud head, and graceful bearing.

As he came lightly up the flight of marble steps, Crystal looked down from her window on him with feelings that were strangers to her heart; a vague fear for their future, a distrust of the present, and withal, a yearning tenderness in her soul for him who might never be hers.

These thoughts it was that lent the shadow to her rare brown eyes, and her lover noted it instantly.

"Crystal, darling, what cruel elf has been painting these shades on that sweet face? Can it not be exercised by my superior power, think you?"

Bertrand lifted her chin, and kissed her ripe, red lips; and she smiled up in his merry blue eyes; but it was a wan-like smile.

Her lover gazed earnestly at her; then his own face became graver.

"Something is the matter, Crystal. Come, tell me."

With a playful show of authority, he drew her to the sofa, and then sat down himself, holding her cold little hands.

"Come now, pet, and let me hear what occasions this cloud, be it trivial or important. I can promise my sympathy and aid."

How noble he was when he spoke so tenderly, and yet so like a strong, proud man!

"I am sure of your sympathy always, Bertrand, dear, even as I desire you shall ever rest assured of my unchanging love for you, come what will."

Crystal trembled a little as the words left her lips, and she snatched a quick glance at her lover's face, on which was written surprise and bewilderment.

"Come what will! Why, my little girl, what is coming? Any thing to warrant your warning me beforehand?"

"Bertrand, I will tell you."

Crystal laid her two hands, clasped, in a dimpled embrace, on young Haighte's knee; she looked full in his wondering, loving eyes, and then told him:

"Bertrand, there came a woman, or I rather should call her a young girl, dark, passionate, splendid, to Edenwilde to-day. She gave her name as Undine Del Rose."

Crystal paused, watching him narrowly, the while, so thankful that he only seemed surprised, not conscious. And yet, did not the young girl say nothing would move him until she mentioned the three test words?

She grew flushed with excitement as she went on.

"This young girl came purposely to see me, Bertrand, to warn me, dear, against, who do you think?"

She was looking wistfully at him. "I never could guess, darling, unless it were escape-grace! Am I right?" He laughed gayly. Crystel's face grew graver. "Bertrand, you have spoken in jest the truth that is troubling me. She *did* tell me you *dared* not, could not, *SHOULD* not ever call me your wife." Crystel's eyes began to moisten, and her lips trembled; it was a relief to see Bertrand spring from the sofa, his cheeks flushing, his eyes gleaming in anger. But, like a dead weight on her heart lay the fact, she had not yet applied her test. "It is a disgraceful attempt to black-mail me, my bird, Crystel; but a pitiful, miserable attempt, as this adventure shall prove to her sorrow. Did she say more, Crystel? No wonder you looked gloomy, you poor little darling!" Her heart throbbed wildly as he put his arms around her waist. Perhaps it might be for the last time; for, when she should have told him the message Undine Del Rose left, and he should, by his agitation, demonstrate his guilt, whatever it was—and guilt it must be that would raise a barrier between them—then, all would be over forever. *Forever!* the thought of the word froze the syllables that she strove to form on her lips. She made a mighty effort; she would know her lover's truth or falsity; she would know the die that should decide her future happiness or despair. "Bertrand, she made me say to you, 'FLORENCE STILL LIVES!'" Crystel's heart stood still, one awful second of suspense; then, a cold, horrible calm of utter desolation settled over her, for Bertrand sprung from her side as if shot. "Good Heavens! what demon of perdition dared whisper those accursed words in your ears?" Crystel, oh, Crystel, don't look so at me! believe me, believe me, it means nothing to alarm you!" He lifted her cold hand to his hot, flushed cheek. "Don't, Bertrand—oh, don't! She said it would prove you—oh, Bertrand, why did you ever learn me to love you so?" Her piteous question came feebly to his ears. "Because I wanted you, my darling, because you *shall* be my wife despite this croaking raven, who dares shadow you with her vile evilness." "But 'Florence'—Bertrand, who is 'Florence'?" Crystel's eyes were fixed piercingly at him now; and she saw a hot flush mount to his forehead. "I can't explain; Crystel, I never dreamed you would hear of this; I never thought to have our blessedness crushed in this foul way. Crystel, my little betrothed bride, only listen; only trust me, only tell me you believe in me, and not in this stranger!" He clasped her tightly in his passionate arms. "But, you must unravel it; this new, awful mystery, that has broken my heart already. Won't you tell me who this 'Florence' is?" "I can't; I dare not," Crystel, there is a secret, a terrible, darkly-terrible secret that never should have come to your ears. But, my darling, I ask you to have faith in me that I am true to you; that I love you. Won't you?" "But she said you *should* never marry me!" His face darkened. "You said she was dark, elegant?" Crystel nodded vaguely. "For several minutes Bertrand stood in deepest meditation; gradually he grew pale, and then stern. He took Crystel's nerveless hand in his own, and looked down in her tearful eyes. "Undine Del Rose was right. Florence does live, and I, therefore, return you your pledged troth. Crystel Roscoe, God in Heaven alone knows the agony in my heart; He alone knows the tenderness I dare not utter; and He only will unravel this mystery that my lips have solemnly sworn never to reveal. If I have sinned against you, Crystel Roscoe, I never meant it; I alone have sinned, and would that I alone might suffer!" He raised her hand to his lips and bowed reverently before he turned away. "At the door he paused, and looked backward; then springing vehemently to his betrothed's side. "Oh, Crystel, Crystel, my darling, my poor, precious darling! My heart is crushed within me at this sudden news. I never dreamed my past would rise up and blast my future; but, Crystel, before I go, let me swear I never loved but you, that you are the only woman who ever heard a love-word from me! Tell me just once, my darling, that you love me!" She was leaning against the man, trembling and white as his marble; her tears were spent, and her voice had a strange calmness that was far more terrible than the most passionate abandon of grief. "Bertrand, the cloud is upon me; it will never be lifted this side eternity's shores; but, Bertrand, dearer than life, stronger than death, is my love for you. Go, now—good-by!" And thus they parted, they whose very souls had merged into one; and the world went on, and the flowers bloomed, and the sun shone. And Bertrand Haighte and Crystel Roscoe wondered at the inscrutable providence of their Creator!

CHAPTER III.

AT THE TOWERS.

The setting sun was shining redly over the high, gloomy turrets, and flaming against the tiny diamond-paned casements; the vale below, where Edenville lay, was draped in the soft, sweet dusk that follows the sunset, while high up on these peaked hills, the glowing glories were still visible. The Towers was a grand old place, brown with age, of storied fable and eerie renown. Legends had it that a half-dozen generations before the present heir, when young Lord Oscar Haighte fled from his fatherland, because of the human blood that stained his guilty hands, he had bought this grand old place, then lying idly vacant on account of wild rumors afloat that inhabitants of another world had made it their home. Just suited to his fierce, fearless nature, was this ill-starred Castle Clavoch to young Lord Oscar, and, in gloomy silence, he and his meek-eyed young wife (whose sad, haunting face was pitted long after she was laid to her last slumber) and their three children, took up their abode at "The Towers," as the owner preferred to call it. At Lord Oscar's death, a paper, closely

written, and imposingly sealed, was left to his oldest son, Egbert, who, after swearing to obey its instructions, was permitted to learn what those instructions were. All his life was devoted to the duty imposed upon him, while the paper, bearing his added signature, was reserved to his oldest son and heir. Thus had this mysterious document, been handed, so ran the legend, through seven successive generations, until, when our story opens, it was in the possession of Bertrand Haighte, the present master of The Towers. Though born of English aristocracy, the young man, as had his father and grandfather, dropped the title to their name, and adopted the prevalent American mode of address and courtesy. On his twenty-first birthday, a time only three years earlier, Bertrand Haighte had read the letter written by his fingers that had so long ago returned to their mother dust. It is true, there was a certain air of romance lingering about this family relic, not to say an atmosphere of mysterious solemnity; yet, perhaps, because in these romantic, matter-of-fact later years of ours, when ghosts and goblins, deeds of chivalry, and knights of gallant renown, are but storied fables, Bertrand Haighte seemed to care little about the entailed letter that was as much his as The Towers itself. He had sworn to it, to be sure, because he knew he had to, or else lose his expected possession; he had a vague sort of idea that it was only a trifling journey to perform, or a deed to do, that the original Lord Haighte had left undone. So, after reading it, it was with speechless surprise he learned the value of his oath; and for twenty-four hours after that memorable birth-night, young Haighte had walked the floor of his library in a restless agony of sorrow, anger and terror. Gradually he grew calmer, as the days wore on; he desisted recklessly along the thinking of the awful brightness; and, by the time he had seen pretty Crystel Roscoe, on her return from college, he was prepared to despise the warning of that letter—forget its injunctions in the fascinations of his sweetheart's grace and beauty. And the result—we have seen it. Bertrand Haighte was galloping up the steep, bridge-path that led, on one side, to The Towers; after he had left Edenville and Crystel. Those horrible words, so simple to a stranger's ear, were fraught with a mysticism and terror to him; for they were the words written years and years ago by Oscar Haighte's hand. "FLORENCE STILL LIVES!" They were the words told to Crystel, who had whispered them, in an agony of doubt and fear, to him. No wonder he had paled and flushed with emotion, for those words, from the lips of one who never had heard of his ancestor's strange letter—her, who was, above all women, to be mistress of The Towers—once filled him with keenest agony and greatest alarm. They were the very words that closed the letter that lay, yellow with age, at the old stone Towers; by those words was a Haighte to be warned if he forgot his oath, or dared violate it; by them was he to know there was no possible escape to happiness or prosperity, except on the terms laid down and signed by so many of the long-dead Haightes. Of all this was young Bertrand thinking, as he dashed recklessly along the frozen road from off the water blowing over his hot, flushed face. At the outer gate, he sprang from his horse, and threw the reins to a waiting groom; entered the grand front entrance, and proceeded to the library. It was very unlike what one would expect to find at The Towers, after seeing the solemn, silent building from without, where not a sacrilegious hand had touched a stone since the days when the drawbridge and armor-hall had been two of the features of the state. A long, light room, looking front on the sloping meadow-land that surrounded the house for several acres; to the side, on the sides of the hills, and the river flowing below, a carpet of light, bright emerald velvet covered the floor; a large oval table, scattered over with books and papers; easy chairs, upholstered in green leather, and shelves filled with a choice, costly selection of works of every description; poetical, historical, political, religious. Into this apartment (which was often used as reception-room during the summer, while the family—consisting of Bertrand's mother and sisters, with their servants—was at the fashionable watering-place, and who had not yet returned) Bertrand went, agitated and grief-stricken. At the threshold he paused in amazement; then, recollecting himself, removed his hat courteously and bowed; for it was a lady, leaning carelessly against the open window, that had surprised him. She immediately came forward in a peculiarly graceful manner. "This is Mr. Bertrand Haighte, of The Towers?" Her voice was wonderfully liquid, and melodious, and he could not avoid noticing the dark, passionate gleam in her eyes. "I am Bertrand Haighte. How can I serve you, madam?" "Miss, if you please, sir, I am Miss Del Rose, of New York." She spoke slowly, significantly. The blood receded from his face, and he stared blankly at her. "And you are the destroyer sent to crush my very life! You have been to her, and blasted all her hopes! and all for a silly fable!" He was looking sternly at her, his angry eyes shining like sheet-lightnings. "No, Mr. Haighte, I am the agent of one whose law I can not evade. Like yourself, I am bound by an oath; unlike yourself, I am not disposed to violate it. I have seen Crystel Roscoe; I have warned her. I now seek you, Bertrand Haighte, to warn you." He intensely brilliant eyes were reading his foolish soul; he felt himself growing helpless under the insufferable glare. "You have no reason to do so, Miss Del Rose. I am acting as I ever intend to act, entirely at my own discretion. Permit me to have refreshments offered, while you excuse me." He would have bowed himself away, but she laid her tiny hand on his sleeve. "No, Mr. Haighte, not till I have given you the counsel I came to give; not till I have begged you to remember the solemn words of the letter handed you from the grave; not till I remind you that the closing words of it are true; that *Florence still lives* lives to avenge her wrongs; lives to punish you for violating your oath!" "But how do you know the words of this letter, that mortal eye save the oldest son of the Haightes never read?"

A strangely sweet smile came to her eyes. "Because I am one of them you have sworn to sweep from the face of the earth!" There was no tremor in her tones, no glimmer of the steady eyes. Bertrand groaned. "The cursed oath—would I had torn it into a million of shreds, and braved the consequences!" "Mr. Haighte, I, Undine Del Rose, and you, are sworn enemies according to the letter. *Shall we be?*" Those wondrous eyes were letting the long lashes curl over their darkling depths, and the voice was modulated to exquisite lowness. "Who are you—tell me?" A descendant of the victim of Lord Oscar Haighte's hand; the only living representative. And my life you have sworn to take. It is in your power now. But I am not afraid. Shall we be enemies hereafter, or friends?" She extended her hand and looked earnestly at him. "Wee comes to the Haightes if they but touch the hand of one of you. You have broken the tie between me and my only one; why should I be your friend?" "I will tell you why. Because I wear this jewel; the jewel the letter spoke of; the jewel the letter commands shall be a sign of peace whenever it comes; the jewel that the Lord of Haighte gave his victim once, then stole from his dead body. By this token, I demand your friendship." She took up her finger, and the glittering green and red veined stone that adorned it. Bertrand rubbed his eyes in bewilderment. She had spoken the truth. But, how had she obtained it, that had been lost these fifty years? He dared not ask. Undine Del Rose, you have conquered. I yield, your friend, the young man ran. He took her hand, warm and throbbing, in his own, so cold and damp. Thus they sealed the compact, and the beautiful girl rode away, a smile of triumph on her passionate lips; and a light that was darkly ominous shone in her eyes as she looked down on lovely Edenville lying amid the darkening shadows. (To be continued.)

The Blackfoot Queen:
OR,
OLD NICK WHIFFLES IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH.
A Sequel to "The Phantom Princess."
BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS.
AUTHOR OF "THE PHANTOM PRINCESS; OR, NED HAZEL, THE BOY TRAPPER."
CHAPTER V.
GRIZZLY BEAR CAVERN.

FULL of eager hope, Ned Mackintosh left his friend, Nick Whiffles, and started toward the Blackfoot village, with the purpose of gaining one glimpse of Miona—she for whom he was willing to brave and to do so much. Reaching the small creek to which reference has been made, he was not a little surprised to find an Indian canoe, lying against the bank at his feet. "Now, if there is no owner near, I call that extremely fortunate," he muttered, as he hurriedly crossed about. "I can cross to the opposite side, and then, perhaps, when the red fellow comes back, he will think he forgot and left it there." He gave one vigorous shove, and sprang in. The canoe moved about half-way across the creek and began drifting downward, when Ned picked up the paddle; but, as he dipped it into the water, it occurred to him that the safer way would be for him to descend the creek to the river, and then steal along shore. By this means he would avoid leaving the tell-tale trail that has proved fatal to so many similar enterprises. So keeping the boat in the center of the stream, he gently used the paddle, and glided easily down the current, reaching the river itself at the end of a few minutes. Still hopeful and confident, he paddled along, keeping close to the shore, and was within a very short distance of the village, when he saw the prow of a large canoe, coming around a short bend in the river. As quick as a flash the young man ran his boat under the shore, where the overhanging limbs looked dense enough to cover him, and with some apprehension awaited the coming and passing of this new danger. He was not kept long in waiting. The measured dip of paddles came nearer and nearer, and when nearly opposite, the bushes in front of him were cleft in twain by the prow of the other boat, and he was captured. "It was all done so quickly that the astounded young man had no thought of resistance ere he was seized and his arms bound." "What is the meaning of this?" he demanded, indignantly. "I came with the traders. *This is dangerous to you!*" The last words were uttered in the Blackfoot tongue. In doing so, Ned entirely forgot himself, and committed a blunder which he saw on the instant was fatal. In the canoe, were both Woo-wol-na and Red Bear, and when they heard their own tongue used so well and forcibly, a dim suspicion of theirs at once became conviction. The appearance of the young man with Nick Whiffles, during the early part of the day, caused both to suspect that he was the boy-lover of four years before, who had promised to return for Miona. Still, the changes in his personal appearance were so great, that they could not dare to feel certain, until they described him lurking in the vicinity of the village, and heard him use the tongue he had learned from his old friend Nick Whiffles. Then as has been shown, all doubt became certainty, and there was no hesitation as to what disposal should be made of him. They could easily kill him, but there were some slight apprehensions that, vengeance might be visited upon them if they did this, as the sharp eyes of Nick Whiffles would be apt to detect and report the crime, while he could be quietly carried to the rocks and dropped into Grizzly Bear Cave and left to die of starvation, without the slightest trace remaining to tell the tale of his fate. Understanding that he had sealed his own doom, Mackintosh attempted no entreaty, resistance or threats. The baleful scowl and exultant looks of Red Bear, and his equally heartless father, told too plainly that all would be thrown away there. Sad, unpeopled as it was, he had brought his own fate upon him. Speeding swiftly down the river, they speedily passed the village, and then on for

several miles, until they reached the hard, bare rocks, where the heaviest foot could leave not the slightest print to betray its passage. Here the body of the despairing, wretched Ned Mackintosh was lifted from the canoe and carried across the rocks to the opening of the cavern. This was irregular in shape and some four or five feet in diameter. Holding the captive for a moment, one of the Indians cut the thongs that bound his arms, so that his limbs were entirely free, and then let him down through the dark, cold air of the cavern he whizzed, certain that his last moment was at hand, and that the next instant he would be a crushed, shapeless mass at the bottom. But, instead of striking the flinty rock, he splashed into chilling water, sinking down fully a dozen feet, when he came in contact with the cold stone, and sprung upward again. As he rose to the surface, he looked about him, but could see nothing at all. Every thing was blank darkness, and only when he raised his eyes could he detect the round, jagged hole above him, through which the dim fading light of day entered. Striking out, however, he took but a few strokes, when he came against an obstruction, climbing upon which he found himself upon a broad flat rock, clear of the water. "Saved from one death to die another a hundred fold more dreadful!" muttered the poor sufferer, as he seated himself upon the rock, and endeavored to think calmly upon his situation. The night so rapidly deepened that when he looked upward, it was impossible to discern the entrance to the cavern, while the gloom around him was absolutely impenetrable. He did not dare to move from where he was sitting, lest he should stumble into some pitfall worse than the one from which he had just extricated himself, and so he prepared to spend the night where he was. "There is no possibility of my escaping from here," he reflected, "or they would not have cast me in. Nothing but the intervention of Heaven, through Nick Whiffles, can save me." "Will he suspect what has become of me? I promised to rejoin him by dusk, and it is past that time now. He will wait and search all the night and all to-morrow, but there is no trail by which to guide him here. He is keen-witted, and so is Calamity, but what clue can they gain to my whereabouts?" "Oh! if Miona could only know, how quick would she fly to my rescue! She would find some means of getting me out of this living tomb. I long for daylight, that I may know precisely my situation." He found that his revolver was still left in his pocket, with his powder-flask and ammunition, but his captors had kept his rifle. He sat for a long time upon the damp, hard rock, but finally dropped off into slumber, which lasted through the entire night; for, when he awoke, the first thing that attracted his notice was daylight shining through the round hole over his head, and which let in enough of illumination to disclose the entire interior of his prison home—Grizzly Bear Cavern. It was over fifty feet in diameter, very irregular in shape, tapering up to a height nearly half as great where the opening was to be seen. Every side inclining inwardly toward this, one glance only was needed to show the prisoner that it was utterly inaccessible, that no gymnast in the world could leave the cavern, without assistance from the outer world. He had some hope during the night, that some stream ran through it, and by means of a long dive he might succeed in escaping, but even this frail hope was dissipated, when he saw that it was not a stream, but a deep pool, which had gradually filled from the oozeings through the sides of the rocks, and that when it reached a certain point, the overflow escaped by filtering through the ground and earth. No; Ned Mackintosh was indeed in his tomb, unless some friend would come and save him. The more he thought, the more improbable it seemed that Nick Whiffles would suspect his fate, and slight indeed was the foundation upon which he could build any hope. So excited and feverish and wretched did he feel for the first twenty-four hours that he scarcely thought of food. Back and forth he walked, pausing now and then to quench his thirst, and to keep his brain from going wild with the thoughts that were racking him. Late at night, he lay down, exhausted and wearied, and slept a feverish, unrefreshing slumber. He awoke several times, and his sufferings would have excited the sympathy of any one. When morning came again, he was sensible of the pangs of hunger, and the thought occurred to him that possibly there might be some fish in the pool, that were obtainable. So he spent a couple of hours in groping around with his hand, and sure enough he caught one weighing nearly a pound. This he carefully preserved, eating morsel by morsel, until nothing but the bones were left, in the meanwhile hunting for more. But search and work to his utmost, he could find no more, and he was subjected to the gnawing pangs of hunger again. Then came the pacing to and fro, like the caged lion, then exhaustion, fever and delirium, all alone in the gloomy cavern. Night and day were all the same, and he lost the consciousness of the passage of time. Whether he had been there three days or a week he could not tell. Why need he seek to know? Death was coming slowly, but surely. Why rack his brain? It only added keenness to his anguish. Forgetfulness, oblivion, stupor were mercies now. Then came dreams so vivid that he scarcely knew whether he was awake or asleep. And lying thus, he seemed to see his old friend, Nick Whiffles, and Calamity, and Miona floating through the air overhead. They seemed to be looking mournfully at him, and beckoning him to come. He ought to move, but could not. "Halloo, Ned!" He opened his mouth, but the words came not. "Halloo, Ned Hazel!" He made an effort to rouse himself, but the stupor could not be shaken off. "Halloo, Ned, are you hungry?" Again he struggled with the energy and desperation of a dying man. Rising to the sitting position, he gasped, moaned, and then feebly wailed:

"Yes, I am *hee*, Nick!" The strained, not listening ear of the trapper heard the faint cry, just as Calamity's white told that he had also caught the same sound. "Hold on, Ned! Keep up a good heart!" came back the cheery voice of Nick. "I'll soon have you out of there." Then the trapper rose to his feet, muttering: "It's 'bout twenty-five feet down to that water. When I tumbled in, the other feller had to cut a young tree, and pass it down there, and I climbed up it. I remember we drew the tree up, and I threw it over the edge of the rock yonder, where it's layin' yet; if nobody ain't took it away." A few minutes' search discovered the sapling, with its knotty protuberances, and this was carefully lowered down the opening, Nick calling out to his young friend to stand from under. "Thar ain't much need of that," he added to himself, "for it's all water right thar, and so deep that he stick has got to be rested agin' the side of the pool." When it was at last adjusted, the top scarcely protruded above the surface, so little was there to spare in the length of the sapling. "Now, Ned, come right up that like a monkey." "Oh, Nick, I am too weak to stand!" "By might!" muttered the horror-stricken Whiffles, "is it as bad as that? Then I'll go down to yer, and if I can't get you out, I'll stay thar and die with yer. Calamity, you keep watch above, for I don't b'lieve you can climb a tree." Fastening his rifle to his back, the trapper carefully descended, foot by foot, until he stood on the rocky floor below. "Ned, my darling boy, whar are yer?" he asked, reaching his hands out in the gloom. "Here, Nick, here!" and a staggering form pitched into his arms. "God bless you, my boy!" murmured the trapper, the tears raining from his eyes; "don't try to help yourself; I'll take care of yer!" It was a work of incredible difficulty to ascend the knotted tree, with him in his arms; not in account of his weight, but the task of clinging with only one arm free. The tree bent fearfully under the additional weight, and tough and muscular as was the trapper, he was utterly exhausted, when at last he reached the top, and lay down panting and almost breathless, beside the still weaker Ned Mackintosh. But Nick speedily rallied, and lifting his "boy" again in his arms, carried him to his canoe, and then he sped homeward, driving the boat with the fury of a madman through the water. Ned railed and ate some of the food brought to him, and the trapper never paused through the night. The young man finally dropped into a pleasant slumber, from which he did not awake until the succeeding day was far advanced, when he roused up, ate more food, and then listened to the story of his true and tried. When he heard all, and especially the part that Miona herself had borne in his rescue, his emotions can scarcely be described. "The noble, brave girl!" he murmured, "she *should* be rescued! Only wait till I recover and am myself again!" "Yes, the first thing is for you to be yourself agin', and you ain't goin' to do that in a hurry." But Ned did do it in a hurry. Young, vigorous, and healthy, he speedily regained his usual condition under the careful nursing of Nick Whiffles, who furnished him with an extra rifle, and took him on several hunts, before he pronounced him fit to engage in the recapture of his beloved Miona. Just one week from the time of his emergence from the Grizzly Bear Cavern, Nick Whiffles declared that the time had come for the rescue of the affianced of Ned Mackintosh. CHAPTER VI. ON THE ELK RIVER AGAIN. On the next morning a canoe was gliding down the Elk River, in which were seated Nick Whiffles and Ned Mackintosh, and the dog Calamity. The former was in the bow, and with his rifle resting lazily between his knees, was watching his young friend, who was using the paddle; as he had been wielding it for the last two hours. "How do I make out?" he asked, with his usual pleasant smile. "Am I doing as well as I did four years ago?" "I sorter fancied you didn't at first," was the reply, "but you learned it too well in them days to forget it soon. I don't see as your stroke can be much improved. How's your wind?" "All right; I haven't forgotten to take plenty exercise, although it has been of rather a different character from this." "Lush!" Mackintosh ceased paddling, and the two men heard distinctly the trapper's song! It sounded quite a distance away coming through quite an intervening stretch of woods, but it was unmistakable. "I declare," exclaimed Ned, laying his paddle across the gunwale and leaning back in the canoe. "That calls up the past more vividly than anything else. Don't speak for a few minutes, Nick." With which he closed his eyes, and listened, and as he did so, he felt that he was indeed a boy again. He was once more roaming through the great wilderness of the North-west, chasing the antelope and buffalo, setting his trap on the mountain streams, and sighing and dreaming over the beautiful daughter of the Phantom Princess. At last he opened his eyes, and said with a smile: "The dream was pleasant, but it has past. Where are the trappers, above or below us?" "Above." "They are coming down-stream?" "Yes, they are gaining on us purty fast. Are you sure they are not Hudson Bay men?" "They're Nor'-westers—I can tell any of 'em by their songs. Do you want 'em to pass us?" "Yes; I would like to see them, and we will let them get through their business with the Blackfeet, before we appear on the stage." Tying idly with his paddle, the trappers soon came in view. They were in three large canoes, averaging a dozen men in each, advancing with a regular, steady sweep, keeping time with the words of a stirring song. "How natural that looks!" exclaimed Ned, as he watched them with a kindling eye; "I am living over my boyhood again." The trappers rapidly overhauled the small-

er canoe, and as both parties were near the center of the stream, they came very near each other.

"As sure as I live," exclaimed Ned, in an undertone, "there is that man who headed the party four years ago. I think his name is Belgrade."

"It's the same chap," he's the one, too, that headed an attack on the Hudson Bay men, three years ago. He came near getting killed at the time, and he's powerful savage on your father. Don't let him know who you are."

"Hello!" called out the individual referred to, as he signaled to his men to stop rowing. "Is that you, Nick Whiffles?"

"I think it is," was the reply.

"Where bound?"

"Down the river."

"Who're you got with you?"

"A young friend of mine, a sort of visitor in these parts."

"He ain't one of them Hudson Bay men, is he?"

"Does he look like it?"

"Not much; have any of 'em been down in these parts since we cleaned 'em out so beautiful?"

"I haven't seen or heard of any. I don't think they will disturb you any more."

"I'd like to see 'em try it—that's all—I'd give a cargo of peltries if I could lay hands on that Mackintosh that played me such a trick four years ago. I heard he left the country after that."

"So he did."

"It's lucky for him—I've heard tell, too, that he had a son that used to be in these parts. Do you know any thing about it, Nick?"

"His son was in the boat that time you and him came so near gettin' afoul of each other."

"Wal, Nick, I'll give you a hundred dollars if you'll show me where I can lay hands on that Mackintosh or his son. I ain't particular which one it is, for you make one squeal through t'other jist, as well as if it was himself."

Nick waved him good-by, and the two parties separated.

"Perhaps if I hadn't grown so fast, that savage fellow might have recognized me, and then there's no telling what would have happened," remarked Ned, with a laugh.

"He feels over the trick we played him that time. We'll take it easy on the river, so as to be sure of not gettin' in the way."

"And now let me swing the paddle awhile," added Nick, reaching forward, "I feel the need of some exercise like that."

Ned consented, and while the hunter plied the implement, he lay back in the boat, meditating upon his errand, and upon its probabilities of success.

"I can't—not live without her," he mused, reflecting upon this charming beauty of the woods. "There has never closed a night around me, that I haven't prayed for the safe coming of this day, and now that it is here, I am full of doubt and misgiving about the success of that which I have always looked upon as certain. I can only ask Heaven to be kind to us, as it has always been in the past."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLOW.

When night had fairly settled upon the river, Nick Whiffles turned the prow of his canoe toward shore, and they landed on the edge of the dense forest, walking inland a rod or so, until they entered a deep gorge.

"I've camped here before," said the old hunter, "and we'll kindle the fire ag'in."

"Are there no Blackfeet near us?"

"There may be in the woods, or on the river; but they can't see this fire, unless one of 'em stabs his toe, and pitches over into it. I find it rather cool to-night, and there ain't much of a moon, so I'll do as I've done before."

In such a place there was little difficulty in gathering sufficient fuel to last the entire night. When this was done, Mackintosh produced a match-safe, and had the fire started in a twinkling. Then they gathered about the crackling blaze, and while they ate their antelope-meat, discussed the all-important errand upon which they had come.

When the night had considerably advanced, the two stretched out, with their blankets about them, by the camp-fire. Calamity, who had spent most of the evening in sleeping at the feet of his master, now roused up as if conscious of the responsibility that had suddenly been put upon his shoulders, and assumed an appearance of vigilance very comforting to his human companions.

"He can be trusted as well as ever?" inquired Ned.

"I think he's a little better, if any thing," replied Nick, with no little pride. "He's more suspicious than ever, and he ain't apt to wait so long afore he puts his teeth into the legs of the animals that come around him. I'd trust Calamity sooner than any human I ever see'd."

Calamity was not forgetful of his duty, and he maintained faithful watch, through the entire night. Nick Whiffles, as usual, slept soundly and sweetly until daylight, but the young man's mind was so preoccupied with his love for and fear about Miona, that his rest proved very unrefreshing. He awoke several times through the night, and sat up and looked about him. On each occasion he saw Calamity whisking about, in and out among the trees, as lively and watchful as though his years were not rather heavy upon him.

Once the lover arose and walked to the edge of the river, standing there a few minutes, and looking out upon its unruffled surface. The night was quite dark, so that the faint moon gave only a dim view of the gently-flowing river, but not a breath of air was stirring, and the deep, hollow silence of the solitude soothed his troubled spirit, and going back to the camp, he lay down and almost instantly fell asleep.

On this day they expected to reach the vicinity of the Blackfoot village, and, from the present indications, a desperate game would have to be played before the jewel could be abstracted from the treacherous hand of Woo-wol-na. It was well that the lover had brought Nick Whiffles with him, for alone he had already worse than failed.

"If I had counted upon any double-dealing like this," said he, "I would have brought a force with me that would have compelled him to perform his part of the bargain."

"I don't know as it would have done," replied Nick, "when a red-skin finds he is outwitted, he's apt to get despit and play the old Harry."

"What would he do?"

"If he found he couldn't keep the gal, like enough he'd sink his tomahawk into her head, so you couldn't get her."

The two men loitered purposely on the way, so as to make sure of giving the Northwest Company abundant time to get out of their reach. This was easily done, and early in the afternoon they caught sight of the returning canoes. Nick paddled up beside them to learn whether there was any thing worth knowing. He was told that Woo-wol-na was there, and it was of him that they had purchased the valuable lot of peltries they were carrying back with them.

Several cautiously-put questions failed to discover that they knew any thing about Miona. The Indians had probably taken care to keep her out of the way of all visitors, as it will be remembered that five years before no signs were seen of her or her mother when the Hudson's Bay men made their visit to the same place upon the same errand.

These indications, although very slight, were pronounced favorable by Nick Whiffles, and Ned Mackintosh was not a little encouraged by his statements to that effect.

"You see, if Woo-wol-na is there, I kin go straight into the village without any dodgin' or sarcumventin', and I kin find out fur myself how the land lays."

"But he will be there to resist you none the less. You know his son?"

"Yes; he's an ugly young cub; he hates me like pizen, and would rather put a ball through me than not."

The afternoon was about half gone when the two men came opposite a small creek, which put in from the northern side of the river, and which was not the one that drew Ned into captivity. Nick paused opposite it, and remarked:

"You've seen it before, Ned, but notice it now."

"One glance will tell me all I can know about it," he replied, looking in the direction indicated. "Why should I feel any special interest in it?"

"My idea is that after we start, instead of going up the river, we'll go up this creek."

"What is to be gained by that, as we shall have to return, or make an overland journey for a long distance?"

"One reason is that I think I kin throw the varmints off the trail, as they wouldn't be apt to think of our doing such a thing; and then by making a tramp of about thirty miles, I kin strike another stream that will take us into the south branch of the Saskatchewan."

"If that is the case it is the thing we should do by all means," replied his young companion. "I never knew that such a thing were possible. How near are we now to the village?"

"It is something like five miles from here; I'm goin' to take you within a half-mile or thereabouts and then leave you while I go ahead and rickynooter."

"At night time?"

"That's the time to go prowlin' round the home of the varmints, fur you musn't forget they've got as sharp eyes as you, and the hardest part of a scout's business isn't to see, but to keep himself from being seen."

At last the point was reached where the rendezvous was to take place. Whiffles ran the canoe close in beneath the undergrowth, where there was no likelihood of its being seen from the river, and cautioned his friend to be careful about permitting himself to be seen by any passing up or down the river.

When they were so close to the village, it was by no means improbable that some of the leading Indians might be near at hand, and the presence of a stranger so near the village would be certain to excite suspicion upon the part of Woo-wol-na.

"I'll leave Calamity with you, as I don't need him," said the hunter, moving away.

"The pup has good eyes, and he'll be good help to you in watchin', and don't get impatient if I ain't back afore the night's half gone."

A minute later the trapper was making his way through the woods with the long, steady stride peculiar to him. There was a thoughtful expression upon his face, for none realized more deeply than he, the momentous errand upon which he was engaged.

The distance was short, and he was not long in reaching the Indian village. He walked boldly in among the lodges, and inquired for Woo-wol-na, but to his surprise learned that he was absent. When he asked whether he was hunting or fishing, and when he would return, he found no one able to answer his question.

After some pointless palaver, he made inquiry for Miona, as he said he wished to speak with her before passing through the village.

The answer to this was the same as the reply to the others. No one could tell where she was.

Nick was fairly taken aback for the time. He had not counted upon any such rebuff as this, and he did not know what it meant; but that it meant something he had no doubt, and something inimical to her for whom he was searching.

He remained a half-hour or more doing his utmost to learn something, but failing altogether. Finally he concluded to return to Mackintosh with his report, and defer any further attempt to penetrate the mystery until he could see Woo-wol-na; when, unexpectedly, he encountered the chief face to face. Nick at once demanded to see Miona. Woo-wol-na's reply was but a single sentence—but it struck Nick Whiffles like a Minie rifle ball. He turned white, staggered back—then recovered himself, and listened to the old chief's brief but emphatic words of explanation. Without another word the old guide strode away into the woods to tell Ned Mackintosh the fearful tidings!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 53.)

The College Rivals:

THE BELLE OF PROVIDENCE.

BY DR. WM. MASON TURNER.

AUTHOR OF "50,000 REWARD," "THE RUBY KING," "MEL YANE," "MASKED MURDER," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII—CONTINUED.

THOSE men who stood by skipper Jack Kelson, on the decks of the Rover, on that wild night of flying spray and shrieking wind, were tried and true; for they had resisted temptation in its most seductive form, and it was by treachery that they had been overcome and bound.

Old Jack Kelson's words were as calm as if his old ship was lying at anchor in her far-away home-port, and his words were clear as a crystal.

The men worked like heroes; the wheel

was manned, the flapping canvas furled to every thing save a small storm stay-stail, and then the real work began.

The cargo was stowed well; but it had to be shifted or naught but destruction was before them. Tared canvas was prepared with heavy weights and slings, and then, piece by piece, the heavy chests were, as sailors phrase it, "broken out," and stowed to the port-side of the vessel.

The Rover felt the change, for slowly she listed, slowly her port-rail sunk, slowly her starboard rose higher and higher in the dark air, and then the scuttle-hole was found. Then the tared canvas was flung over that gaping orifice, into which the water had been pouring furiously.

Heaven be praised! went up from every heart; and then, overboard again into the little boat, still towing and surging alongside, went two brave fellows with hammers and heavy nails; and, under the tall, careening hull of the big ship, they nailed home the friendly cloth over the awful scuttle-hole. Again they were quickly on deck, and the friendly small-boat hoisted in.

A loud hurrah of triumph burst from the throats of that little band of men, who were so bravely fighting death; and then, each one bowed his head to Him who had given them the victory!

Now Jack Kelson was master of the situation. Not a drop of water could force its way through the tared canvas; and what had already leaked in amounted to nothing more than ballast. The cargo was unharmed, the victory complete.

The battle with the gale was child's play, for old Jack, the skipper; he headed it; not he cared not how it roared and raged; the good old Rover, stiff and staunch, was under his feet; she obeyed her helm, and the old man could laugh defiance at the storm.

That night, at two bells, when the gale was at its height—when the Rover was burying her bows at every lunge beneath the wildly-moaning billows, a small, dark object, just perceptible, was seen by the watch on the forecastle. Another moment, and a faint crash and feeble, shrieking cries were borne above the blast, as the heavy ship thundered on.

All on board knew that cry to be the wail of drowning men, and all knew who those men were.

The storm blew itself away, but the Rover was unharmed, and then dropping sail after sail to the wind, Captain Kelson stood away for a friendly port.

That port was reached; the old Rover's scuttled hull securely patched, and then, with a light heart the gallant old skipper loosed his broad sails to the lively breeze and bore away on a long stretch, across the white-capped seas, toward his distant haven in the West.

That he reached that haven—that he came into port, under his fore and mainsail, by the red light of Welcome Hoxley's burning mills, we already know.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ALL'S WELL!

WITH the glorious dawn of such intelligence as the safe arrival of the Rover, suddenly bursting upon him, reason and coherence, which for a year had forsaken Arthur Fleming, returned to him; he was well again—same in mind as ever. He no longer moaned and chattered over the lost tea-ship; the gallant craft and her noble captain had returned, bringing health, reason and happiness.

Not many weeks elapsed before the precious cargo was sold, and Arthur Fleming was once again a rich man, and what was better with him, he was free and untrammelled.

But the old merchant did not forget the gallant skipper and his noble crew. A substantial remembrance that gladdened their hearts, was presented to each one.

Nor was the old Rover forgotten, for, on the day of sale of her tempest-tossed cargo, a princely banquet was held aboard of her, her gayest bunting was flung to the breeze, and her old, time-honored decks were joyous with congratulations, song and jest.

To that banquet, besides Fenton Thorne and Stephen Smith, none were invited, save Captain Jack Kelson, his family and her crew of six.

A notable event of the occasion, a most hilarious one! was a grand *pas de deux* executed by Stephen Smith and old Jack, the skipper. Yes, for once in his life, and only once, wine had gotten the better of the old man's reason, and he sung and danced, and shouted and roared like a very Bacchus.

Of course, pretty, blushing, happy Madeleine was there, and nearly all the time the banquet lasted, she sat holding Fenton Thorne's hand in hers, and silently murmuring her thanks to Heaven.

Welcome Hoxley's death created some surprise in Providence, but no regrets. How it happened, was only surmised; for poor Myra was a raving maniac and could not tell.

The maniac's crushed remains were borne quietly out to Swan Point, and there laid out to rest. But few mourners followed in the scanty train; and to-day, no chiseled marble indicates his grave.

The unfortunate Myra Hoxley, in a few days, was conveyed by sympathizing neighbors to the Butler asylum, where she was at once admitted.

There was no mistaking her malady.

Ralph Ross disappeared from Providence, and our friends were never again troubled with his presence, though Stephen Smith searched high and low for him, and actually spoke of offering a reward for him, through the medium of the newspapers.

Another year yet passed, and Madeleine's birth-night had again come around. In that year many events had taken place.

By a little judicious management, Mr. Fleming had recovered his splendid mansion, as well as the little cottage by Vue de l'Eau. Old Hoxley had never paid an installment upon either.

In the mean time, Myra Hoxley had died a sad, weary death in the asylum, leaving no message to any one, no parting words betokening reason. But a friend was raised up to her then, one who remembered her, despite the dark circumstances of the past which linked them together.

Madeleine Fleming remembered her; and over the poor girl's humble resting-place in the country, she caused to be erected a plain but beautiful shrine. That marble column, Madeleine, herself, decked with immortal wreaths, still stands there, a monument to John, the domestic, we must not forget to record, after the change had taken place in his old employer's fortune, had duly presented himself, and applied for restoration. The very impudence of the act, coupled with the indisputable fact that John was a good servant, secured him his old position.

Fenton Thorne had graduated with distinguished honor, and Stephen Smith was still with him.

We must not omit to state that Tim Smooth, who had so well impersonated young Thorne in the mock-marriage ceremony with Myra Hoxley, the clairvoyant, had been duly and severely thrashed by Stephen Smith; the affair netting the latter just \$53 37 1-2, and costs.

And now Madeleine's birth-night had again rolled around. This time, as in the olden days, the splendid mansion was aglow from top to bottom. But there were not many there this night to witness the happy scene; for Arthur Fleming had not forgotten how his *marry* friends deserted him in the hour of his adversity.

The special scene which was witnessed, and to which we had reference, was the wedding of Fenton Thorne and Madeleine Fleming.

Stephen Smith, his dusky face radiant yet sad, clad in ball-room attire, stood close by the pair, as the clergyman read the solemn troth-words. Old Mr. Thorne, Fenton's father, too, was there; and Captain Jack Kelson, and the poor, dotting father, Arthur Fleming.

They were all.

It was a quiet, solemn scene; but glad marriage-bells were chiming cheerily in every heart.

Years passed, and Arthur Fleming was gathered to his fathers.

Then Fenton Thorne, with his young wife, went westward, and dwelt in his father's splendid mansion in Herkimer. Old Mr. Thorne had died some years before.

The Fleming mansion was again sold out of the family—this time for good.

Stephen Smith had long since been separated from his bosom-friend. They often wrote to each other, and Stephen, who was practicing law in Louisville—or pretending to practice, for half the time, he was gunning or fishing—had come on twice to see "Fent, my boy."

Then, as time rolled on, the ominous war-cloud of 1860 spread over the great American Republic, and the sound of drum and the clash of arms echoed over hill and plain.

Then the ship-of-state emerged safe from the gale, and the old flag of our fathers floated from the mast-head.

Late one cool evening in the month of September, 1865—a year memorable in our annals—as Fenton Thorne and his still lovely and youthful wife were sitting in the front porch of their majestic mansion, looking musingly, out over the purple hills and the red-tinted forest—dreaming old-time, happy dreams, and living over other days again—a carriage suddenly rolled up and stopped at the gate.

Then, promptly and unhesitatingly, a person inside opened the carriage-door and sprang lightly out. After having his trunk, a large one, set down, the gentleman settled with the driver, and turned toward the house.

Fenton Thorne had already descended to meet his guest, whoever he might be.

The stranger was a tall, finely-shaped, elegantly-dressed man; but, one coat-sleeve was pinned across the broad chest; the sleeve was empty.

Long, dark locks fell behind the stranger's ears, and a heavy, raven mustache, sprinkled here and there with silver threads, swept over the mouth, even down upon the prominent chin. The complexion of that Indian-like face, was like bronze.

Slowly he drew near.

Fenton Thorne paused and held his breath, and then suddenly he dashed forward with a wild cry of joy, and flung his arms around that tall form.

Then from the stranger came the same familiar words and tones of old:

"God bless you, Fent, my boy!"

Then Madeleine, the matron, rushed down to meet and greet the old friend; and following her, came her two bouncing boys, the one Stephen, the other Smith Thorne.

Stephen Smith, dear reader, has never left his old friends. He is with them now, a confirmed old bachelor, with his snug pile of money. There he will remain till his days of "ere and yellow leaf" have gone.

The good fellow has never breathed a word as to the side on which he fought during the civil conflict, but he points to his empty sleeve, and says in a low, earnest voice:

"I have had enough of it, Fent! and thank God! we all have the old flag again!"

One piece of war-news Stephen imparted:

On a distant battle-field, at the set of sun, he had seen the dead body of—RALPH ROSS; and—yes, Stephen vowed it—the fellow was shot in the back!

And now, we have reached:

THE END.

A Woman's Heart.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

"AUNT MAGGIE, who wrote those lines in your old album, upon the mocking-bird? I like them so much," asked pretty Ada Heath, of her maiden aunt, a lady of forty-five.

"They were written by a gentleman who was my dearest friend, Ada. I mean Major Charles Branch," answered her aunt.

"Yes, I have heard father speak of him; he was killed in Mexico in '48, was he not?"

"He was reported killed, but I never have believed him dead. He must come back, for he promised me he would," and a shade rested upon the still beautiful face of Margaret Heath, a tear dimmed the still lustrous eyes, and dropped upon the time-worn book before her.

Three months previous to the opening of this sketch, Ada Heath had been left an orphan, and her father's maiden sister, Miss Margaret Heath, had gone North and brought the young girl to her plantation in the "Sunny South," adopting her as her child, for living as she did all alone she felt that Ada would be a pleasant companion to her; and as she had dearly loved her brother, she was glad to do all she could for his only child.

Those lines were written twenty-five years ago, Ada; how well I remember the day. We were seated, Major Branch and myself, in that arbor you see in the garden, and a mocking-bird was singing in an arbutus tree near us.

I had just received this album as a present from your father, and had asked Charles, I mean Major Branch, to write in it, so when we came to the house, he asked me to get it for him.

It was a lovely moonlight night, and the mocking-bird was still singing beautifully when I returned with the book. The major took it, and wrote these lines, and this last verse has been my particular pet," and Miss Heath read:

"List! 'tis the mock-bird of the South-west climate, Pealing his notes on high, While far away off, in echoes sublime, They break on the night-wind's sigh. And thus, that bird will pour through the night, His song in the sleeper's ear, While away the spirit will take its flight, To scenes where oft it has known of delight, Unmixed with a sigh or tear."

"Ada, nearly twenty-five years ago I bade Major Branch good-by, his promised wife. He was a United States army officer, and was ordered with his regiment to the frontier of Mexico, and served with distinction there. Report said he was killed; true it is I never heard but once from him after his departure, but then you know it was a long way for letters to come in those days, and he must have written. I had promised him never to marry until I was certain that he was dead, and as years passed by, and I received many offers, for I was an heiress you know, and considered beautiful in those days, I kept that promise."

"When I was thirty my father died, and left me this plantation, and again I was beset with suitors, but I rejected all, greatly against my father's dying wish, which was that I should marry, for some of my gentleman friends were noble men."

"Thus the years have gone on, and today I am an old maid of forty-five, but I am true to my promise to Charles Branch made twenty-five years ago, and now I expect to live on until my death, with my promise unbroken, for my woman's heart would not allow me to prove untrue to my first and only love."

After this conversation between aunt and niece they were confidential friends, as well as relatives, and Ada felt that her aunt Maggie trusted her and looked upon her as something more than a child.

About two years after she had learned the history of her aunt's past life, Ada was returning from a horseback ride, attended only by her groom, an ebony youth of twelve years.

Approaching the avenue-gate, distant half a mile from the residence of her aunt, her horse shied suddenly, and nearly unseated her from the saddle, at the figure of a man who had been leaning against the fence.

"Pardon me, miss, for frightening your horse; I trust you are not hurt." The words were kind, and the manner of the speaker that of a gentleman, though he appeared poorly clad, and stained with the dust of travel.

"Oh, no, sir, neither Charm nor myself saw you until you moved. Are you going up to the plantation?"

"No, miss; I am on my way to a friend's house, living some miles beyond; but, years ago, when I was a young man, for you see I am an old man now, and he passed his hand over his care-worn face and through his gray hair."

"I used to know the family that lived here, and I was looking at the changes that twenty-five years had made."

The old man ceased speaking and gazed sadly toward the white house, that could be seen through the distant trees, while Ada, whose mind was ever active, remembered her aunt's story of Major Branch, and as quick as lightning it flashed upon her that he stood before her, and she said:

"Are you not Major Branch?"

"Ha! am I recognized? but, no, it can not be, for you are not yet twenty; but who are you?" and the man's face flushed as he looked upon the young girl.

"I am Ada Heath, and Miss Margaret Heath is my aunt."

"Miss Margaret Heath! Is not Maggie Heath married?" The question came with a quick gasp from the old man.

"No, she is not, and never has been," returned Ada.

"Then God forgive me; I have cruelly wronged her, for I believed her married to Colonel Wharton?"

"My aunt Maggie has told me of her past life, and of her engagement to you, and to this day she is true to you, Major Branch," said Ada, her face pale with excitement.

"Listen, child! During the Mexican war, when wounded and expecting to die, Colonel Wharton visited me, and giving me a letter from Maggie Heath, told me she was to marry him upon his return to the United States, and he was then about to start home. The letter was in Maggie's handwriting, breaking off our engagement. For months I lay upon that sick bed, begging to die, but at last arose with the loss of my arm; see this empty sleeve," and he raised with his right arm the loose sleeve of his coat. "Then I exiled myself from America, and buying a ranch, settled in Mexico. I was prosperous, but upstating the cause of Maximilian, whose reign I believed would bring peace to poor, distracted Mexico, I lost my all when he met his sad fate; my property was confiscated, and a poor, old, broken-down man, I determined to return to my boyhood's home and ask to die there."

Moved with pity at the emotion of the man, who leaned against her horse, Ada spoke comforting words to her aunt's lover, and told him of incidents in her life which proved she yet loved him.

Then it was arranged that Ada should go on to the house and break the news to her aunt, and in a short time Major Branch was to follow. As the girl dashed away with a happy heart, followed by her ebony groom, tears stained the weather-beaten face of Major Branch, and he thanked God for guiding him again to his early home.

In a short while he walked slowly toward the house, and as the sun sank behind the forest, he ascended the stairway, and was met by Ada.

"I have told her all; she is in the library; go in," and as the poor exile crossed the threshold with trembling steps, Ada closed the door behind him, and Charles Branch and Maggie Heath were once more together after long years of cruel separation.

The finger of time had pressed heavily upon the brow of each, but neither cared for that, but only thought of the present. At length the major spoke.

A VOICE FROM THE SEA.

BY H. A. FRANCIS.

Roll!—billows, roll!
I never shall tire of thee;
For oftentimes I seem to hear
A voice from the sea.

At break or close of day,
Where'er I chance to be,
Still to my ear, distinctly comes
A voice from the sea.

It whispers words of hope:
Sweet words they are to me;
It speaks of brighter, happier lands,
That voice from the sea.

And how can I be sad
When feeling that 'tis he,
Who speaks of those bright, happy lands,
His voice from the sea.

Then roll! billows, roll!
And I will merry be,
While waiting here, my summons from
His voice from the sea.

Bianca;

OR,

THE SCAR ON MY NECK.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

SHE was perfectly lovely that night, in her black velvet dress, and its Honiton overdress that rivalled vainly the darkness of her bright eyes and ivory-shining hair. At her throat she wore the Carruthers solitaire; and that was her only ornament, unless I except the trailing, drooping spray of dusky pink roses in her hair.

I was dressed in a white pique—I usually wear white, summer and winter—and I know there was a rising anger in my heart as I looked at her, as she adjusted a glove-button. Why should I not feel jealously angry?

I was a Carruthers as well as she; only—ah! that horrid "only"—she was the rich, courted Bianca Carruthers, only child and heiress of her father; while I—*I* was "nobody but Fay"—pretty, silly, useful little Fay, you know; Fred's daughter and that low French girl's. Poor, dear, Fred, to think he threw himself away so!

That was the way they—*I* mean my father's folks—generally introduced me. At first I was indignant that my dear, dead mother, who loved my father so, and who was so patient and angel-like, was considered "low," because she was a poor girl. Then I had learned to wisely refrain from my outbursts; and by the time I had been at Carruthers Court six years, and had been taught by experience what that red gleam in my cousin Bianca's black eyes meant—and it shone never so luridly as when I attempted to protest against their inhuman way of speaking of my mother—I held my tongue; and then they said, "How docile Fay has become!" But I hated them all; from the kindly old gentleman who was my grandfather as well as Bianca's, down to beautiful Bianca herself. I think they all reciprocated this natural-born antagonism; for they let me alone, every one of them, and I went about the old, castle-like mansion with a fierce pride that I possessed equal shares in it; with a savage determination to stay there so long as I chose, despite their coldness, their magnificent contempt of me.

For was I not a Carruthers? Bianca went out a great deal, and her lovers numbered a score at least; while I utterly ignored by the "set," the Carruthers graced used to smile grimly after they had all gone to some aristocratic reception, and then console myself with my books.

"Fay," Bianca said, one miserably sleepy morning, paying me the unwonted compliment of a visit, "the Emersons receive to-night, and my violet moire needs attention. Could you just arrange the satin a trifle?"

So I laid aside my work, and followed her to her dressing-room.

"Annie is sick with one of her headaches, or I'd not annoy you. Then, you know your taste is so exquisite, and Chauncey Delorme will be there. You know what a critic he is."

No, I didn't know any thing about it, and I told her so; then asked her if she would have the title and satin arranged berthe or Pompadour.

I felt the vexations frown I would not look up to see; then directly she spoke:

"Fay Carruthers, you know I love him, and am going to win him."

I looked up then; and I don't think she particularly enjoyed my rejoinder.

"Yes, I think I remember his name now. The gentleman your party followed all last summer from Switzerland to Paris. He must be a paragon."

She flushed a little, but it was in anger.

"Thank you. He is a paragon."

"I hate paragons."

That was all either of us said about it; I finished the task, received a most chilling "thank you," returned an equally heartless "not at all," and went back to my room.

It stormed fearfully that night; great gusts of rain-fraught wind went dashing madly by the great old house; but she went to the Emersons, clad in her royal robes, to see him, Chauncey De Lorne—she and all the family—leaving the Court to me and the servants.

After the carriage had gone, I went down to the library, a grand old room, my favorite retreat, anticipating a delightful hour among the red-and-gold covers. I had kept on my white pique, but had unloosened my hair—it was my only pride, so like my mother's in its thick lengthiness, its waving, lustrous goldenness; so, curled up in an arm-chair—scarlet velvet it was—with my hair nestling lovingly around me, and the gas turned on to a delightful radiance, I took down a favorite author, and began to read. I have not the slightest idea how long it was, but I must have fallen asleep; for, of a sudden, I opened my eyes, and in a frightened sort of surprise, I remember, met the gaze, half amused, half deprecating, of a stranger.

"Pardon me, please; I just this moment came in, expecting to find Miss Carruthers. I am Chauncey De Lorne."

He bowed with such courtly grace, and so winning a smile, that I ceased to wonder why Bianca was so in love with her cavalier.

"My cousin has gone, an hour since, perhaps, Mr. De Lorne."

"Then you, too, are a Miss Carruthers, I judge?"

"Yes, I am Fay."

"Fay!" he repeated; and I never knew till then how liquidly-melodious my name was; and a little flush of pleasure rose to my cheeks.

"I am very much gratified to make your acquaintance, Miss Fay. May I hope it

will be continued as delightfully as it has begun?"

"I certainly have not the slightest objection to it, sir. I have heard so much of you."

I could have bitten my tongue off for my thoughtlessness. I saw a comical little smile hover a second on his beautiful mouth.

"From Miss Bianca, I think I may venture to say. She and I are great friends, I am proud to assure you."

Then I began to hate him; the idea of him and her being friends! Something in the thought made me shiver.

"I will be late at the Emersons, I fear, but 'Fay's' don't often beguile us poor mortals nowadays. Good-night!"

He was off, as suddenly and mysteriously as he had come.

Later, Bianca returned, flushed with a glorious triumph; and I wondered—well, what did I wonder?

The very next day, when Chauncey De Lorne came, he sent cards to both Bianca and myself. Like a tigress, she caught my arm.

"Girl! do you know him?"

"I was terrified at the lurid glow in her eyes, but I was not to be silenced."

"I know him."

"Well?"

"What is it you wish to ask me? if I am in love? because if you do, I might say I had as good a right to win him as yourself."

She clenched her fists and shook them in my face.

"Don't you dare! He is the first, the only man I ever loved; beware how you cross my track, you vile French creature, or you shall repent in ashes every day of your life!"

I felt her hot breath on my face, caught the red gleam of her eyes, and then she was gone.

I changed my collar, twisted a geranium in my hair, and was down in the reception-room before Bianca, wondering what she would say.

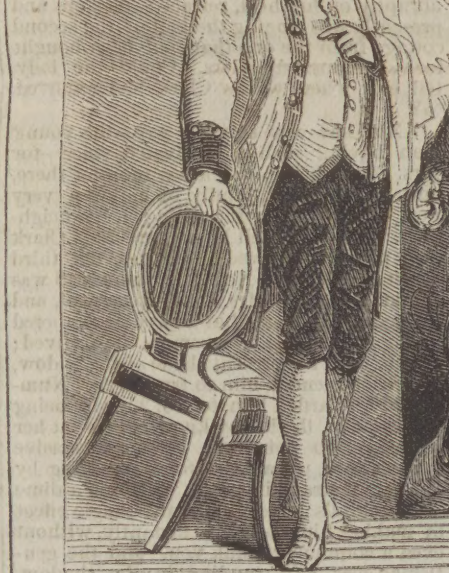
All smiles she entered, with a mockingly reproving glance at me.

"Fay, you sprit! always in advance of slow, sober me!"

Her audacity struck me speechless for a second, then I grew bold.

"Always in advance, my dearest Bianca, and always intend to be."

If she detected the hidden meaning, she made no sign.



BIANCA.

A month after that, there gleamed an opal stone on my fore-finger; and Chauncey De Lorne had put it there when I promised to be his wife.

At first I decided not to tell Bianca; then I thought how childishly silly I was to be afraid of her; so I went straight to her, and told her all.

Heaven send I may never behold such a face, such eyes, such lips as hers looked to me that moment, as, in the utter despair of her baffled hopes, her unrequited love, her mad jealousy, she caught my hair in her hands, jerking me till I almost screamed with pain.

"Fay Carruthers! how dare you? how dare you, a poor beggar, put yourself in my place? Answer me, and tell me you will give him up, or I'll kill you!"

I verily thought she was going mad; I felt her quick, flame-like breath on my forehead as she bent over me and hissed the words in my ears.

Then, ere I could indignantly scorn her overtures, her mood suddenly changed; so suddenly that I was more terrified than I had been by her anger.

"Fay, it has been too severe a blow for me. I fear I said awful things to you, who are not to blame. Will you forget them?"

She had walked over to her dressing-bureau as she spoke, and I was wondering what she meant, when, like a flash of lightning, she turned upon me, flinging her gossamer web of a handkerchief in my face; while under her sheeny folds, I caught one glimpse of her link-jeweled penknife. I never can describe the sensation that came over me; but too well do I remember the awakening.

They said it had been a fearful blow she had dealt me with the beautiful toy, and today I can feel the scar on my neck, that the cicatrice has left in healing.

What happened all those weeks, when I lay prostrate and unconscious in a low nervous fever, Chauncey has told me.

Bianca, with her hot passions and ungovernable temper, had, in a fit of temporary insanity, attempted my life; then, when I was expected to die momentarily, when the sleepless officers of justice were determined to avenge poor me, remorse and terror had completed the work; Bianca was hopelessly crazy.

To-day, while I am preparing for my wedding, she is a chained prisoner in her room at the asylum.

Poor Bianca! I never loved her, but my heart bleeds for her; in all her glorious beauty, never more to go out in the glad

sunshine, or among the blooming flowers; while I, poor, unworthy I, have had given to me the best jewel awarded to woman, the priceless gem of a fond, loving, appreciating heart.

Soon to Commence!

The great story of the Wilderness, in the days when the remorseless Shawnee—the Tiger of the Woods—made Kentucky "a dark and bloody ground," is soon to commence in these columns. It is by a writer of wide-spread reputation, and a work of more than ordinary interest. Look out for

THE AVENGING ANGELS!

The White Witch:
OR,
THE LEAGUE OF THREE.

A STRANGE STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.
BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "HEART OF FIRE," "WOLF DEMON,"
"SCARLET HAND," "AGE OF SEAPERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.
IN THE NET.

"WELL, I'm blest!" muttered Pippan, as he watched the carriage drive off. "If this 'ere ain't miraculous—wonderful for to behold! Why, these familiar faces makes me think that I'm across the water. Shall I follow them?"

A moment he pondered on the question.

"What's the use?" he said, reflectively. "The girl, evidently, lives in that hotel, so I know where to find her if I want her; and as for the dashing nob with the golden hair—blessed if that hair-dyeing ain't a brilliant idea!—I know where to find him if I wants him. But, do I want him? That's a question that I can't answer just now. I shall have to use the ocean cable to find out. I might as well inquire a little as to who this girl is—what tack she's sailing on now, as a nautical man would say. Just to think of my coming to this 'blasted country, you know, for to enjoy myself a bit, and getting right into business."

Then Mr. Pippan missed his tooth-pick.

"Another gull gone!" he muttered, as his eyes found it on the pavement. "That's the second one that this 'ere party has cost me."

He supplied himself with a fresh tooth-

pick, there was nothing absolutely wrong in Montgomery's situation, for a third party—O'Connell—was present. But as the bard of Avon wrote, "trifles light as air are to the jealous, confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ."

The subtle mind of the chief of the League of Three had kindled the spark, the other members of the brotherhood must fan it into a blaze.

Seeing Frances at the window about spoilt all the pleasure of the drive for Montgomery. Yet there were moments when, amid the winding roads of the Park, secluded as it were from the world, in gazing into the dark, lustrous eyes of the beautiful stranger—eyes which seemed to beam with a softer light when they looked upon him—he forgot the memory of Frances Chauncey.

The drive over, the party returned to the hotel.

Montgomery and O'Connell made their adieux to the countess.

Politely, she pressed them to call again. Montgomery fancied that her request was addressed more to him than to his companion, and that her eyes said more than her words.

But, as a rule, nearly all young men are vain in the presence of a pretty woman; perhaps Montgomery was not an exception to the rule.

"By the way," said O'Connell, as they descended to the street, "did you notice that Miss Chauncey didn't look as amiable as usual to-day?"

"Do you think so?" Montgomery answered, evading the question.

"Well, yes. It struck me that way. I only gave her a casual glance, though, as we passed; perhaps I am wrong."

"I never saw her out of sorts," Montgomery said. "I don't believe that she could get angry if she tried to; she is very amiable."

He was vainly fighting against what his heart told him was truth. He was sure that Frances was displeased.

"What does 'lago' in the play say about 'bells in their parlors, devils in their kitchens?'" said O'Connell, shrewdly.

"That's nonsense, as far as Miss Chauncey is concerned," said Montgomery. "A better girl never lived."

"Yes; I believe some wise man once said that all women are angels until they were proved to be—the contrary," O'Connell replied, with latent sarcasm in his tone.

He supplied himself with a fresh tooth-

pick, there was nothing absolutely wrong in Montgomery's situation, for a third party—O'Connell—was present. But as the bard of Avon wrote, "trifles light as air are to the jealous, confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ."

The subtle mind of the chief of the League of Three had kindled the spark, the other members of the brotherhood must fan it into a blaze.

Seeing Frances at the window about spoilt all the pleasure of the drive for Montgomery. Yet there were moments when, amid the winding roads of the Park, secluded as it were from the world, in gazing into the dark, lustrous eyes of the beautiful stranger—eyes which seemed to beam with a softer light when they looked upon him—he forgot the memory of Frances Chauncey.

The drive over, the party returned to the hotel.

Montgomery and O'Connell made their adieux to the countess.

Politely, she pressed them to call again. Montgomery fancied that her request was addressed more to him than to his companion, and that her eyes said more than her words.

But, as a rule, nearly all young men are vain in the presence of a pretty woman; perhaps Montgomery was not an exception to the rule.

"By the way," said O'Connell, as they descended to the street, "did you notice that Miss Chauncey didn't look as amiable as usual to-day?"

"Do you think so?" Montgomery answered, evading the question.

"Well, yes. It struck me that way. I only gave her a casual glance, though, as we passed; perhaps I am wrong."

"I never saw her out of sorts," Montgomery said. "I don't believe that she could get angry if she tried to; she is very amiable."

He was vainly fighting against what his heart told him was truth. He was sure that Frances was displeased.

"What does 'lago' in the play say about 'bells in their parlors, devils in their kitchens?'" said O'Connell, shrewdly.

"That's nonsense, as far as Miss Chauncey is concerned," said Montgomery. "A better girl never lived."

"Yes; I believe some wise man once said that all women are angels until they were proved to be—the contrary," O'Connell replied, with latent sarcasm in his tone.

He supplied himself with a fresh tooth-

pick, there was nothing absolutely wrong in Montgomery's situation, for a third party—O'Connell—was present. But as the bard of Avon wrote, "trifles light as air are to the jealous, confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ."

The subtle mind of the chief of the League of Three had kindled the spark, the other members of the brotherhood must fan it into a blaze.

Seeing Frances at the window about spoilt all the pleasure of the drive for Montgomery. Yet there were moments when, amid the winding roads of the Park, secluded as it were from the world, in gazing into the dark, lustrous eyes of the beautiful stranger—eyes which seemed to beam with a softer light when they looked upon him—he forgot the memory of Frances Chauncey.

The drive over, the party returned to the hotel.

Montgomery and O'Connell made their adieux to the countess.

Politely, she pressed them to call again. Montgomery fancied that her request was addressed more to him than to his companion, and that her eyes said more than her words.

But, as a rule, nearly all young men are vain in the presence of a pretty woman; perhaps Montgomery was not an exception to the rule.

"By the way," said O'Connell, as they descended to the street, "did you notice that Miss Chauncey didn't look as amiable as usual to-day?"

"Do you think so?" Montgomery answered, evading the question.

"Well, yes. It struck me that way. I only gave her a casual glance, though, as we passed; perhaps I am wrong."

"I never saw her out of sorts," Montgomery said. "I don't believe that she could get angry if she tried to; she is very amiable."

He was vainly fighting against what his heart told him was truth. He was sure that Frances was displeased.

"What does 'lago' in the play say about 'bells in their parlors, devils in their kitchens?'" said O'Connell, shrewdly.

"That's nonsense, as far as Miss Chauncey is concerned," said Montgomery. "A better girl never lived."

"Yes; I believe some wise man once said that all women are angels until they were proved to be—the contrary," O'Connell replied, with latent sarcasm in his tone.

He supplied himself with a fresh tooth-

pick, there was nothing absolutely wrong in Montgomery's situation, for a third party—O'Connell—was present. But as the bard of Avon wrote, "trifles light as air are to the jealous, confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ."

The subtle mind of the chief of the League of Three had kindled the spark, the other members of the brotherhood must fan it into a blaze.

Seeing Frances at the window about spoilt all the pleasure of the drive for Montgomery. Yet there were moments when, amid the winding roads of the Park, secluded as it were from the world, in gazing into the dark, lustrous eyes of the beautiful stranger—eyes which seemed to beam with a softer light when they looked upon him—he forgot the memory of Frances Chauncey.

The drive over, the party returned to the hotel.

Montgomery and O'Connell made their adieux to the countess.

Politely, she pressed them to call again. Montgomery fancied that her request was addressed more to him than to his companion, and that her eyes said more than her words.

dow! I couldn't have wished for any thing better. She saw her lover drive past the house with a beautiful girl; one fully as pretty as she is. She is not the woman that I take her for if she is not jealous. And if she is jealous, she herself shall rend the bond that binds Montgomery to her. Of course he can easily explain the circumstance; but what woman ever listened to reason—especially if she was jealous?"

O'Connell paced onward with hasty steps. Ideas were thronging, quickly, upon his brain, and his stride took the cue from their speed.

"I must find either Stoll or Tulip," he muttered. "One of them—better Stoll, for I doubt if Tulip will be in the mood after his repulse—must call upon Miss Chauncey this afternoon; get there before Montgomery, and in the course of a casual conversation contrive to tell her that it is all over town that Montgomery is desperately in love with this beautiful French girl. Aha!"

and O'Connell laughed again. "Leone plays her part to perfection." Then his mind came back to his scheme. "With the information of her lover's madness after another woman in her mind, when Montgomery calls his reception will be any thing but a gracious one. I think I know his nature pretty well. His pride is the strong point in his character. Let Frances offend that pride—which she will be pretty apt to do, for women are very free with their words when anger rules them—and every thing will be at an end between them. If she casts him off—wounds his pride—he will call her false and fickle—learn to despise her. Love will be replaced by contempt. A man can not love a woman that he thinks is unworthy of him. Then, desperate—for all men are desperate to a certain extent when disappointed in these matters of the heart—where will he seek consolation?"

O'Connell laughed, as he put the question to himself.

"Where would I seek it, or any other reasonable man? Why, in the love of the woman who does look kindly on my passion. Will he not do the same? He is only human with all his strength of mind. I've noticed as a fact in this world, the nobler the man—the greater his mental power and talent—the bigger fool he is where a woman is concerned. All great men have a great deal of the woman in their natures. Once he seeks her love, he falls like a blind fool into our power. The snare is carefully laid. He can not fail to be caught by it; and, once in the net, I'll warrant that he'll not break through the meshes."

O'Connell's lips were compressed firmly and the evil light was lurking in his eyes, as he thought of the triumph in the future.

"Even this mysterious White Witch, who seems by accident—for it can not be aught else—to have hit upon my very plans, can not save him. I'd give a trifle to know who the White Witch is! but—bah! it was only a masquerading joke; by chance she hit on something that seemed like my ideas."

Then O'Connell saw Tulip and Stoll standing in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

CHAPTER XIV.
THE THREE IN COUNCIL.

TULIP and Stoll greeted the chief of the League with a look of inquiry as he joined them.

"All goes on well," said O'Connell, in reply to the look.

"You have introduced him to the lady?" Tulip asked.

"More than that. He has not only made the acquaintance of the fair countess, but he has rode about the Park by her side for over an hour," O'Connell replied, with a look of triumph.

"You have pushed matters, then," Stoll said with a coarse laugh.

"The game we are playing is a difficult one; we can neither afford to lose a trick nor to hesitate in our play," replied O'Connell, gravely.

"So far you have succeeded," Tulip said.

"Yes, beyond my hopes. Montgomery has not only made the acquaintance of the siren who is to lure him to ruin, but he has been fascinated by her."

"By Jove!" cried Stoll, exultingly, "the beginning is beautiful."

Tulip showed no signs of joy upon his thoughtful face. Farther-sighted than his companion, he knew, full well, that the first trick does not decide the fate of the game.

"He has been attracted by the beauty of our siren," Tulip said.

"Yes; but more, I think, by her conversation and manners even than her beauty. Our siren is not only a beautiful woman, but an accomplished lady. There is a nameless grace about her—a subtle charm—that affects even me, sometimes, and yet I have known her many years," replied O'Connell.

"She has charmed—fascinated him?"

"Yes," and he proceeded to relate the events of their ride and to explain his further plans for alienating Montgomery and Frances Chauncey.

The other two listened, eagerly.

"One of you—or both—must call upon Miss Chauncey this afternoon. In the course of conversation, contrive to speak of Montgomery. Say that you saw him driving in the Park with this girl; hint that it is whispered about that he is desperately in love with her; in fact, that it is a common rumor that he has offered to marry her, and that bets have even been made at the clubs as to whether she will accept or refuse his offer."

Tulip's eyes sparkled as O'Connell developed the scheme that was to separate two loving hearts.

Stoll listened with wonder. His dull brain could never have framed so clever a device; yet he easily perceived how likely it was to succeed.

"A glorious idea!" exclaimed Tulip, warmly.

"It will separate them, beyond a doubt," Stoll added.

"I think so, then in anger he will seek consolation in the smiles of our siren."

"By the way, O'Connell, who is this pretty girl?" asked Stoll, bluntly.

"Why, the Countess of Epemay—"

"Yes, yes; I know that's what she calls herself; but, who is she, really?" asked Stoll, interrupting O'Connell.

"A young French girl, by name, Leone Epemay, and the daughter

"Don't understand what?"

"Why, how is it that she is willing to act as our agent in this matter?"

"Ah, that's a secret," returned O'Connell, evasively. "The girl is not rich, of course; for it is the money of the League of Three that supports her in the style in which she lives. But she does not do my will for money."

"What for, then?"

"My dear Stoll, you do ask terrible questions; and the worst of it is, that I can't answer them," said O'Connell, pleasantly.

"You can if you want to?" Stoll returned, bluntly.

"Exactly! but it happens that I don't want to," and O'Connell laughed in the face of the broker.

"Well, she is a deuced pretty woman. I suppose, as she is living on our money, it won't be any harm if I take a fancy to make love to her?" Stoll said, coarsely.

"Yes, there is one objection," O'Connell replied, quietly.

"And that is?"

"Myself," said O'Connell.

"Eh?" and Stoll looked astonished.

"This lady that we speak of, to please me, has condescended to act the part of a lure, to entrap the bird whose wings we wish to clip; yet, as surely as I stand here, so surely would I kill the man—save one alone—who should dare to speak of love to her." The tone of O'Connell was icy cold, no trace of passion, and yet both his hearers felt sure that he would keep his word, should the event happen that he alluded to.

"I suppose the one man is yourself, eh?" Stoll said, after a few moments' silence.

"Perhaps so," replied O'Connell, carelessly.

"We had better make an early call on Miss Chauncy, so as to get there before Montgomery," said Tulip, changing the subject. "If once he has a chance to explain his reason for riding with this stranger, we will have a difficult task in inflaming the girl against him."

"That is a good thought," exclaimed O'Connell, quickly.

"By the way, we got a little information out of Montgomery this morning that may prove useful to us," said Stoll.

"What is it?" asked O'Connell.

"Since the abrupt departure of Catlin, his banker, he has lost faith in the Wall street gentlemen, and hereafter, he says, he is going to keep his bonds and like valuables in a safe in his own room."

"That is information, indeed," cried O'Connell, quickly. "A safe in his own room, eh?" and for a moment O'Connell was silent, apparently in deep thought. "If he should be robbed some fine night it would be a heavy blow," he said, breaking the silence.

The three looked at each other.

"Can it be done?" asked Stoll, mysteriously.

"When three determined men, with plenty of money, set about accomplishing any possible object, the chances are ten to one that they will succeed," replied O'Connell, ambiguously.

"He must have quite a sum in Government bonds; or, at least, I know that he did have," said Tulip.

"I'll think it over. First, we'll detach him from this money-belle; then, our next blow will be at his money," O'Connell said, quietly.

"We'll call upon Miss Chauncy about two," Tulip said.

"You will call, then?" O'Connell asked, with a side glance into the face of the young man.

"Yes," Tulip replied, and as he spoke, he detected the look of the other, and a slight flush tinged his cheeks.

"I'll meet you here, then, about three," O'Connell said, and then they parted.

"Poor, silly moth!" muttered O'Connell, as he watched the two proceed up the street; "he flutters around the garish flame, hoping against hope. Ah, Tulip Roche, Frances Chauncy is not for you! Another has marked her for his own, and the chances are that he will win her." Then, for a moment, he was silent. Busy thoughts were in his brain.

"By Jove!" he cried, suddenly, "in all my desperate ventures never have I had such smooth sailing as this has been. If my course lies through the reefs and amid the tempest, it is, seemingly, far in the future."

Leaving O'Connell to his meditations, we will follow Tulip and Stoll.

"What a deuced mystery he makes about this girl," grumbled Stoll.

"I saw by his eye, the moment you spoke, that you had touched upon a delicate subject," said Tulip.

"What do you suppose is the nature of the tie between them?"

"He is either her lover or she is his wife," replied Tulip. "I guessed one of the two the moment I saw the girl."

"And that is the reason that she is willing to perform this service for him?"

"Yes."

"But, why does he make a mystery out of it?"

"That's hard to say," replied Tulip, thoughtfully. "This O'Connell is a strange fellow; not an ordinary man in any sense of the word. He, himself, is a mystery. We have known him some time, Herman, yet what do we know of him?"

"Nothing," answered Stoll, after thinking for a moment.

"Exactly; in saying 'nothing' you have only spoken the truth. We know that his name is Lionel O'Connell, or, at least, that he says it. We have no proof that it is his name. And his occupation, a writer for the press; yet he is not known to be actually connected with any newspaper. Then, again, he always has plenty of money."

"And I never saw one of these newspaper fellows that ever had any money, before," interrupted Stoll, in his coarse way.

"Well, I don't suppose that their salaries are very large, save in some few exceptional cases," Tulip said; "but this man, apparently, has plenty of money, and spends it as freely as if he were worth a million."

"I don't understand it!" Stoll exclaimed, with a shake of the head.

"Nor I," Tulip said. "This O'Connell has a wonderful way of getting his friends to tell him all about themselves, and yet he keeps his own history concealed. You never hear him speak of what he has done in the past."

"Never!"

"He's a strange fellow."

"A smart one, though. That idea of driving the carriage, with Montgomery and this French girl in it, past her house was a capital one."

"Yes, and it now rests with us to clench the nail that he has driven," Tulip said.

"Well, what do you think about it?" asked Stoll, suddenly.

"About what?"

"Why, our plot. Is the League of Three going to accomplish the object that they aim at?"

"I think so," replied Tulip, quietly, but a gleam of fire was in his eyes as he spoke.

In imagination he saw Angus Montgomery, a broken man—ruined alike in fortune and in mind.

Even the day-dream of vengeance was sweet; what then would the reality be?

Such was the question that Tulip Roche asked himself.

Herman Stoll was not thinking of vengeance; his mind was filled with thoughts of the beautiful girl, who was called, the Countess of Epernay.

The broker was trying to think of some plan by means of which he could discover who and what she really was. One of the League wished to stab the chief of the Three.

CHAPTER XV.

A TRANSPARENT LIE.

TULIP and Stoll went to lunch.

Then, lunch over, they took their way to the residence of Frances Chauncy.

"Don't you feel a slight reluctance to call upon this girl, after the way she has treated you?" asked Stoll, as they approached the house.

"No," replied Tulip, after hesitating for a moment, as if thinking the question over.

"Well, I don't know; I think I should."

"You don't understand my feelings," Tulip said, slowly. "I love this girl as I have never loved any other woman. I do not think that she is to blame in the matter. Montgomery is one of that kind of men whom the world calls fascinating. He has paid devoted attention to the girl. I do not think that she really knows her own mind. She does not understand what love really is."

"My dear boy," interrupted Stoll, "I never saw a woman yet that did. They think that they love a fellow until another one comes along, and then they suddenly discover that they like Number Two better than Number One; then they like Number Three better than Number Two, and so on it goes, to the end of the chapter."

"My dear friend Stoll, I'm sadly afraid that your knowledge of women is limited, or else you have been unfortunate in your acquaintance," said Tulip, dryly.

Their arrival at the Chauncy mansion put an end to the conversation.

Entering the house, they were ushered into the parlor.

In a few minutes Frances Chauncy stepped into the room.

The manner in which she greeted Tulip showed signs of embarrassment.

"We called, Miss Chauncy, to ask how you have been since your return to the city," said Stoll.

"Oh, quite well, thank you," replied Frances, with her sweetest smile.

If the blonde beauty was suffering from an attack of the heartache, one would never have guessed it by looking at her face.

Her round, baby-like features were as placid as ever. No traces of emotion could be detected in the full blue eyes.

"I should have called sooner, but I have been so very busy down-town, getting my affairs in order," said Stoll.

"I expected you," Frances said, "and I have been really quite surprised that you, Mr. Roche—such a near neighbor, too—haven't called upon us before."

Woman-like, she was not content to let the man go whose suit she had repulsed. She wished him still to bow in homage at her shrine, although with her own lips she had told him that she was promised unto another.

It is so hard for some women to give up their old lovers, even when they are pledged to a new one.

"I beg ten thousand pardons for my neglect," said Tulip, quickly; "but I haven't really made a single call since I came back from Newport."

The man who said that a lover feeds on air, and, like the chameleon, changes his color at turn of the wind, uttered a truth.

The few simple words of Frances had kindled new hope in the breast of Tulip. He again hoped to win the woman who already had broken faith with him, as if she could be trusted a second time! But love is a madness that changes sensible men into idiots.

"Neither have I," said Frances. "I suppose, though, that the city and the people look about the same as usual."

"Oh, yes; quite the same," replied Stoll, whose conversational powers were not brilliant.

"Have you seen any of our friends lately?" asked Frances, carelessly.

The tone did not deceive Tulip; his wits were keen enough, except when love blinded his eyes.

He knew that Frances spoke in reference to Angus Montgomery when she put the apparently careless question.

"Yes," Tulip said. "I met Mr. Montgomery and Mr. O'Connell to-day. They were just going for a drive in the Park."

Frances' eyes were cast down upon the floor, and she tapped her little foot upon the carpet softly.

There was a question that she was very anxious to ask, and yet she did not know how to word it.

Stoll saved her the trouble.

"Did Montgomery and O'Connell have a lady with them when you saw them?" Stoll asked.

It was the question that Frances wished to put.

"Yes."

"Who was the lady?" Frances asked, and she did not raise her eyes from the carpet as she put the question.

"The Countess of Epernay."

"A countess!" and Frances raised her gaze from the floor in astonishment.

"Yes," Tulip answered. "She is the daughter of a French count who was killed in this war now raging in Europe. Of course she doesn't pretend to any title here. She is only plain Miss Epernay. I believe she intends to make her future home in this country."

"Yes, I've heard all about her!" exclaimed Stoll. "She is a most beautiful girl, and has turned the heads of all the young men."

"And who is the special favorite—that is, if she has any?" asked Frances, coldly; yet there was a bright tinge of scarlet burning in her cheeks.

"Why, haven't you heard?" asked Stoll, apparently greatly astonished.

"No," replied Frances.

Then she looked at Tulip. His eyes were bent upon the floor, as if he wished to avoid her glance.

By Tulip's manner, Frances guessed the name that she was about to hear.

"Why, it's Montgomery, you know—Mr. Angus Montgomery," Stoll said. "They were out riding in the Park together to-day. Mr. O'Connell knew the lady in Paris, and he gave Montgomery the introduction."

Frances was conscious that her face was betraying her. She could not conceal her annoyance.

The little white teeth almost met in the scarlet lip, and their points were tinged with blood.

Stoll had glanced out of the window after he had finished his speech, and therefore her agitation escaped his notice, while Tulip kept his eyes fixed upon the floor, as if he did not wish to enjoy the triumph of hearing that the man who had supplanted him had now forsaken the treasure he had so easily won.

In her heart Frances Chauncy thanked Tulip for his consideration. She was grateful for his mercy.

One taunting look from him would have flushed her face with tears.

"I expect the wedding will be a grand affair," Stoll said, finding that no one spoke.

"The wedding!" Frances exclaimed, in a voice that trembled in spite of her efforts to appear unconcerned.

"Yes, of course—grand affair—you know—everybody is anxious for an invitation!" cried Stoll, glibly.

"Indeed!" and Frances elevated her eyebrows. She was beginning to get over the emotions that led to tears and experience those that led to anger.

"Yes, of course; it will be the wedding of the season. I expect Tulip, here, will be the bridegroom's best man."

"Is that possible, Tulip?" asked Frances.

Tulip nodded his head. He could not lie as easily as the broker; his education had not been finished in Wall street.

"Then there is no doubt about it?" Frances said.

"None in the world. She's a beautiful girl; lucky fellow, Montgomery, to secure such a treasure," said Stoll, who lied with ease and grace, the result of long experience in the Stock Exchange.

"When is the wedding to take place?" Frances' usually mild blue eyes were flashing with unwonted fire.

"Ah, I can't tell you that. In fact, I don't believe that it is fixed yet. Montgomery doesn't even wish that the fact of the engagement should be made public. Only a few of his friends know of it. Of course, when I said that everybody was anxious for an invitation, I meant everybody that knows about it. In truth, I believe that Montgomery denies the fact except to a few intimate friends, like Mr. Roche and myself. Of course, seeing what we have seen of his attention to the lady, he couldn't very well deceive us," and Stoll looked wise.

"It seems to me that it is very sudden," said Frances, thoughtfully.

"Oh, yes!" cried Stoll; "love at first sight, you know—over head and ears. Never saw a man so—if you'll pardon the expression—so spoony, in all my life!"

"I hope that he will be happy, for I have always liked An—Mr. Montgomery, I mean," said Frances, vainly striving to appear calm.

"Of course," Stoll replied. "She'd like to put red-hot coals in his wedding bed, or stinging nettles or something else that would make the fellow feel uncomfortable," he mentally added.

"Come, Herman, we must be going," said Tulip, rising.

"Pray call again, gentlemen," Frances said, as she accompanied them to the hall.

"Of course—delighted," said Stoll, gallantly.

"And Tulip, you will not forget an old friend," Frances said, in a tone of entreaty, and she extended her hand to him.

Stoll was half-way down the steps, with his back discreetly turned.

"You wish me to come?"

"Yes," replied Frances, quickly and firmly, and her eyes said more than her tongue.

"I will come, then. Oh, Francis! if you'll only let me hope—" Tulip said, pleadingly.

"Don't speak of that now, please," Frances said, softly, a tear gleaming in her eye.

"Good-by."

Then Tulip closed the door and Frances was alone with her sad thoughts.

Slowly she returned to the parlor.

An album on the center-table caught her eyes.

She opened it and from it took a picture. It was the likeness of Angus Montgomery.

Between the two pictures was roused at the sight of the handsome face of the man who had proved false to her.

"Strange how familiar the face of that girl, who was with him in the carriage, was to me. She is the woman who has won the love—no not the love—but her lip curled, and the little fancy of this man, whom I thought I loved. Now I hate him!"

Frances stamped her foot in anger, and her fair brow was wrinkled by many an ugly frown.

It was not strange that the face of the woman, known as the Countess of Epernay, was familiar to Frances. She had seen her many a time. But she never guessed that the richly-dressed girl, attired in the height of fashion, who rode by the side of her lover, was the humble music-teacher, Leone Basque.

Silks and laces work wondrous change in this world, sometimes.

"And I have felt his kisses on my lips, and believed that he loved me. I have given up my lips to him, freely—kissed him as I have never kissed any one else. Oh! I could cry with shame and vexation when I think of it!"

Frances paced up and down the parlor, half in tears, half in anger.

Then she halted and looked again at the picture.

"I'll tear it to pieces!" she cried.

"No, Frances, don't do that; give it to me!" said Angela Chauncy, who had just entered the room and overheard the words of her sister.

"You heard what I said?" asked Frances, with flaming eyes.

"Yes."

"Take his picture, then," and she tossed it contemptuously toward her. "I know why you wish it! I know your secret! You love Angus Montgomery!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 42.)

DR. WM. MASON TURNER.

A new story by this favorite writer and most graphic delineator of heart life, will soon be introduced. It is a romance of New England life, full of passion, pathos, and that power which springs from a strong motif. Dr. Turner is not a prolific writer. Such students of human nature never are. Hence, what he writes is like a carefully-painted picture, finished in all its parts and quite perfect as a whole. Readers may anticipate the publication of the new serial as a great pleasure in store for them.

Bought at Auction.

BY E. WENBORN.

"Two thousand dollars! How did you ever get such a paradise for so small a sum?"

"Bought it at auction, sir, bought it at auction," replied Mr. Jones, rubbing his hands together, with a low chuckle, and then adding, as he observed his companion's face, to be sure of his ground, "it all came about this way:

"Jo Clark and I were great friends, and the very day I persuaded him to buy this spot of land I had a strange idea that it might yet be mine. No one knew as well as I how he worked day and night to finish this lovely cottage, or that the overexertion was what brought on his fatal disease. But I was with him, sir, to the last. Called out by a morning going to work to inquire for the slightest improvement in his condition, well knowing that it would never come. But one day, when he was very weak, Jo said to me:

"Don't you think I ought to make a will, Seth, to save the wife and little ones from being cheated in case—in case any thing should happen?"

"His voice trembled so, and he looked at me so beseechingly that, would you believe it, I almost made a fool of myself, and was going to tell him to do so, when I remembered that no one ever put a good thing in my way, so I said for him not to trouble his head with such nonsense, that he was getting better as fast as he could, and every one but himself could see it. When I called next morning he was dead."

"Miserable dog!"

"Sir—"

"Only a troublesome gnat that the warm evening has brought to life," explained the gentleman; "pray proceed, I am quite interested."

"As a young lawyer I thought you might be," returned Mr. Jones, with a reflecting face, "but really I don't know as I have anything more to tell, except as I said before, I bought the estate at auction."

"And what did the nifty of a widow do with herself?"

"I can't say, but I think she went to live in the city; some wretched place no doubt, for I believe she came of a low family."

"You could give no idea of the locality, I suppose?"

"I don't think I could," returned Mr. Jones, his cunning eyes getting very small and bright indeed.

The men parted, Seth Jones to feel a disposition for biting his own tongue, and Lawrence Chester to muse as he sauntered on in the dusk, enjoying his cigar, how readily people inferred a lawyer's shrewdness, no matter how base his nature.

"I'd like to punish that miserable scoundrel," he thought, "partly for my love of justice, and to begin my practice the way I intend to continue it. I never had a case yet, but better make one than be idle. Here goes it then, old boy!"

He threw his cigar away, and, turning abruptly on his heel, retraced his steps and presently was ringing the bell of the second cottage from the one that had been bought for two thousand dollars. Could the lady tell him where widow Clark had removed to?

"No," she was sorry to say—the young man having such a cultivated voice—for Mrs. Clark being but a few months there, and keeping her family of children very near, had little time for calling on her neighbors. Could she tell him where Mrs. Clark had previously lived? Oh, yes, the third street to the right, No. 18. Number 18 was begged leave to say that a sweeter tempered or more industrious woman never lived; couldn't tell the present abode of the widow, but recommended him to try No. 22. Number 20 forwarded him to No. 22, who being possessed of the happy knowledge, sent her little boy to point out to the persuasive voice a poor, unpainted house, standing by itself in a straggling lane. Placing a dime in the child's hand, it had the magic effect of making him disappear instantly, without even a common "thank you," and the gentleman was left standing in the shadow. The unusual warmth of the evening had caused them to set the door open, and thus the scanty interior was revealed. By the light of a well-trimmed lamp, a little girl, between twelve and thirteen years old, in a black dress, sat crocheting busily. A child in a cradle gave vent to a sick, fretful cry, when not kept in continual motion by the little worker's foot, and two small boys, playing in a corner, completed the scene. Observing a woman's figure coming toward the poor abode, the young man drew back so far into the shadow that she went in without observing him or knowing that he followed her as far as the darkness threshold. The little girl looked up with patient, questioning eyes, and the mother said, despondently:

"No, Mabel, I didn't get it, because they were so busy preparing for a New Year's party to-morrow. They said they would pay me Saturday night."

She tried to smile, and was about to turn up the lamp a little brighter, when the child in the cradle cried:

"Mamma, me orange?"

"No, Jessy, no; poor mamma got no money."

"An' ain't we going to have no supper?" asked one of the little boys, disconsolately.

In vain did the patient widow try to swallow and gulp; the great lump in her throat grew bigger and bigger, till at last she burst into a fit of tears that shook her chair with their vehemence. It was really wonderful to see the little girl in the black dress, get up and try to soothe the mother's grief. I think the young lawyer must have fallen in love with her there and then, for he stooped down, and gently slid something shining along the floor to their very feet, then another, and another, and then got up again and ran away in a very unlawyerlike manner; stopping at the corner of the lane to wipe his eyes and pretend it was the wind.

The New Year's morning brought Lawrence Chester to the widow's door again, but this time he entered, and after impressing the little crocheter—woman—who was as busy as though she had never left off since last night—with the sweetness of his tones, he told the widow he had reason to believe she had been defrauded out of her property, and requested her to give him the history of how she had parted with the pretty cottage and garden.

"Well, sir," she began, "I have tried to believe that every thing was done honestly, but when I remember that the place cost us between five and six thousand dollars, it

seems the poor children ought to have something out of it."

"And you have had nothing?"

"Absolutely nothing, sir. I trusted entirely to Seth Jones, and he advised me to let him administer to the estate, which I did, and he made out an inventory of all we possessed, and appraised every thing at a third of its proper value, which I objected to, but he told me it was all right, and I blindly let him do every thing as he would

Camp-Fire Yarns.

Hawk Heron.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE PLAINS.
BY GEO. L. ADEN.

BEFORE the building of the Union Pacific Railroad I had occasion to cross the plains. My companion and guide upon the journey, was a well-known "mountain man" who was called by the peculiar, alliterative name of "Hawk Heron." He had the reputation of being a good hunter and a most daring and determined Indian-fighter. He was rather slight in figure, but wiry, and very active in all his movements; and moreover he was what a woman would have called a singularly handsome man. That is to say, there was a peculiarity in his appearance rendering it at once prepossessing and picturesque. His hunter's garb, his bronzed complexion, and full-bearded face, added to this effect.

His manner was abrupt and his speech confined to as few words as possible. Taciturnity appeared to be his prevailing characteristic, and I was told, before I left Fort Badger, that I would not find Hawk Heron a very sociable companion upon the road. It was evident that he bore among the mountain men the reputation of being odd. This made no difference to me, however; my business required that I should push on at once to the Missouri, and so long as he was a trustworthy guide he might suit his own humor in regard to conversation upon the way.

The solitude of those vast plains is apt to render human nature more congenial, and by our lonely camp-fires at night the guide chatted considerably and I found, to my astonishment, that he was a man well educated, familiar with the amenities of social life, and fitted to grace a prominent position in society.

"What in the world could ever have induced you to adopt the wild life of a hunter, Heron?" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

He smiled bitterly. He lay by the fire, and the flames lit up his features distinctly. "A woman!" he answered, with a forced laugh. "You might have guessed that."

This then was a case of blighted affection. I had hardly deemed him the kind of man that would throw himself away for a woman, and I told him so.

"I have said it looks foolish to you," he replied. "And yet why should it? Women control our destinies—say what we will—and a man in love, is a man out of his senses."

"In some respects," I responded; qualifying his remark, which I thought rather too sweeping.

"Let me tell you my story," he cried, suddenly. "I will do so, even at the risk of being thought a fool for my pains."

I was rather pleased at the idea, for I had conceived quite a friendship for this eccentric man during the few days we had been thrown into each other's company.

"Do so, by all means," I rejoined; "and be assured of finding a patient listener. I am anxious to hear something of the history of so distinguished a hunter as Hawk Heron."

"Pshaw!" he replied, impatiently. "My name is not Hawk—my name is Edward Heron."

"Where did the Hawk come from then?" "Oh! from some of the Indians—I led several attacks upon them, pointing down upon them 'like a hawk,' as my comrades said, and from that circumstance came the name. One always gets some distinguishing name among the mountain men."

The Indians call me "Hawk" altogether.

"The name seems very applicable," I returned, glancing at his slight figure, sharp features, and restless, bright eyes.

"Oh, yes," he answered, carelessly. "A dozen of these red warriors of the plains, Sioux or Cheyennes, will fly like frightened sheep at the snort of my mustang, (who seems to hate an Indian instinctively), never waiting for the pounce of the 'Hawk.' I travel these plains with impunity, protected by my reputation as an Indian-fighter—a reputation acquired by the many reckless attempts which I have made to throw away my life. That life has been strangely preserved—so strangely that my comrades, in these wild fights with the Indians, firmly believe that I bear a charmed life, and that neither knife, arrow, or bullet can deprive me of it."

"Do you share in this superstition?" I asked, curiously.

"Of course not," he answered. "My very recklessness of danger has proved my safeguard. I could not throw away the life I was so weary of, although I tried hard enough. You look at me in wonder; you can not understand, probably, that a man this side of thirty should grow tired of his life."

I confessed that I could not.

"The solution is very simple," he continued. "I will tell you what drove me to this wilderness, and the wild life I am leading. Five years ago I held a lucrative position in a mercantile house in New York city. One day, having occasion to cross the river on some business in Brooklyn, the ferry-boat came in contact with a sailing-boat upon the river, through the mismanagement of the party in the boat, which consisted of two gentlemen and a lady. The sailing-boat was upset; I saw the lady struggling in the water, her male companions being unable to render her any assistance, and, on the spur of the moment, I threw off my coat and plunged into the river."

"It was nobly done!" I cried.

"So everybody said at the time," he continued, carelessly. "As a swimmer, I was very proficient, and I had little difficulty in keeping the lady's head above the water until we were drawn on board the ferry-boat; and a very pretty head it was, as I could see even in the excitement and peril of our position."

Her male friends had been rescued by means of ropes thrown to them, and we stood, dripping the water from our deluged garments, surrounded by an admiring and curious throng of spectators on the deck of the boat. I then learned that the lady I had saved, for they would insist upon it that I had saved her life, was Alice Layden, the daughter of a prominent and wealthy resident of New York; and that her male companions were her father, and her cousin, Mr. Oliver Vander, a scion of an old Knickerbocker family.

Mr. John Layden was profuse in his expressions of gratitude, and laid the blame of the accident upon Oliver Vander, imputing it entirely to his carelessness. Vander treated me very superciliously, but I was more than repaid for what I had done by the

sweet smile and murmured thanks of the pretty Alice, and I cared little for the studied insolence of Mr. Vander. I did not like him from the first. I deemed him filled with an overweening conceit of his own importance. First impressions, I know, are not always to be depended upon; but I never found occasion afterward to change those I formed concerning Oliver Vander at that moment.

"The accident led to my becoming a guest at Mr. Layden's house—an elegant mansion on Murray Hill. Of course I fell desperately in love with Alice, that was a natural sequence; and though I knew I had a rival in Oliver Vander, the discovery of that circumstance occasioned me but little uneasiness, as I was pretty sure that Alice did not love him, and I thought she did love me. Inspired by this hope, I avowed my passion to her and was blessed with a favorable answer; but there was an obstacle in the way, and that obstacle was this insufferable coxcomb of a cousin. The pet scheme of Mr. Layden's life was to unite the two branches of the family by the marriage of Alice and Oliver, and thus secure the Vander property to his grandchildren—consolidating once again the two estates. He had set his heart upon a rich son-in-law, and I was a poor man, though I could boast as proud a name as his own; but money is of more account than blood in this world. I had little hope of gaining his consent."

"Alice, however, was more hopeful. She was her father's darling—all he had in life to love, his wife having died many years before, and she thought that her happiness would be his first consideration."

"I went to him in an honorable manner and made known my pretensions to his daughter's hand. To my great surprise he received my proposition in a very affable manner, told me that he had hoped that Alice would eventually marry Oliver Vander, but if I had secured her preference he would offer no objection; but that Alice could choose for herself."

"I carried these glad tidings to Alice, and from that moment we were affianced. It is not to be supposed that Oliver Vander would submit with a good grace to my successful rivalship. Rich as he was already, still he coveted the additional wealth that a marriage with his cousin would bring him. He was continually throwing out slurs about my poverty before Alice, and stigmatizing me, covertly, as an adventurer and fortune-hunter; it was by a strong effort that I refrained from quarreling with him; and I did so at the earnest entreaty of Alice."

"I think he contrived to poison her mind against me. She was continually going to different places of amusement in his company, to which I strongly objected, and one day a violent quarrel took place between us. She taunted me with my poverty, and charged me with caring more for her fortune than I did for herself. The taunt stung me to madness, and I rushed from her presence fully resolved never to look upon her face again."

"Three days after I saw the announcement of her approaching marriage with Oliver Vander in the newspapers, and then New York grew hateful to me and I wished to get as far away from it as possible. I resigned my position, converted my few effects into ready cash, and started for the great West. At St. Louis I joined a hunting-party for the Rocky Mountain region, and grew so fond of the wild life that I adopted it altogether. Its fierce excitement allays and numbs the bitter memories of the past."

He paused suddenly, and I could see by the workings of his features that these memories still troubled him.

"Did Alice Layden marry her cousin?" I asked.

"I suppose so," he answered, moodily. "Then you do not know?"

"No; I have never heard from her from that day to this."

"Do you still love her?" I inquired, a little curiously.

"No; not a bit!" he replied, gruffly; "but come, I have kept you long enough awake with my stupid story; sleep now, and I will watch until the day breaks."

I reclined before the fire, and was soon fast asleep. Our little camp was in a clump of timber on the bank of a small stream. The trees effectually hid our fire from any roving bands of Indians that might chance to pass along the open prairie.

How long I slept I know not, but I was suddenly aroused by a strong grasp upon my shoulder, and as I struggled from the lethargy of sleep, I heard the report of rifles, faint in the distance, coming over the prairie. I saw the face of Heron bending over me, and started up. The day had broken, and the gray light streamed down through the branches of the trees.

"What is it?" I cried, hurriedly.

"A party of hunters chased by a band of Indians," he answered. "They are making a running fight of it, and if they can only reach this timber they will be safe."

"Can they do that?" I asked.

He shook his head dubiously.

"I fear not," he replied. "Their horses appear to be jaded, and the Indians are gaining fast upon them. There is a way to save them," he added, with a keen look in my face, "if you dare attempt it with me."

"I'm your man," I cried, a little nettled by the doubt implied upon my courage. "I'll second you in whatever you do."

"He grasped my hand fervently.

"Good!" he responded; "there's the ring of true metal in you. My plan is this: let us mount our horses, take these Indians in the flank, which we can do by skirting this piece of timber, charge them full tilt, and give them the contents of our rifles. They will be dismayed by this sudden attack, and the fugitives will have time to gain the shelter of these trees. Half a dozen determined men could hold a thousand of these red horsemen at bay here, for they never attack on foot, and their arrows are not of much account against rifle-bullets."

The next instant we were in the saddle, with rifle in hand, riding quickly through the trees. We emerged upon the plain, in full view of the fugitives and their pursuers. The fugitives consisted of four persons, and to our great surprise, one of them was a woman. They were urging their horses toward the clump of timber, while close behind them, yelling like demons, came twenty, at least, of the fierce, red warriors of the plains."

There was little hope for the fugitives, for our charge did not save them. I shivered as I observed the odds against us, and glanced at Hawk Heron, and that glance reassured me. His eyes were fairly ablaze, and every feature in his face quivered with excitement. His emotion was contagious. If the Indians had been a hundred instead of twenty, I should not have hesitated.

"Now," he said, "yell as loud as your lungs will permit, but do not fire until we are close upon them, and then make sure of your man. Remember, there is a woman, and we must save her anyway. Go!"

We went. The horses dashed over the plain, and the guide shouted and yelled out his name, something after the manner of a knight of old uttering his battle-cry, and I screamed until I was hoarse. The savages, amazed by this unlooked-for attack, reined in their horses, who reared upon their haunches. We gave them fire point-blank, emptying two saddles, and the next moment the Indians were flying fleetly over the plain.

Never was a victory more easily achieved. We rode back to the timber, where we found the fugitives waiting to receive us.

"You are the very men we are looking for," cried one of the party, an old hunter, advancing to Heron and saluting him as an old acquaintance as he dismounted. "We've got a female here that's been a-looking for you."

"A female?" echoed Heron, in the greatest surprise.

The woman who had formed one of the pursued party now timidly approached Heron.

"Edward!" she murmured, gently. "Good heavens!—Alice!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," she answered, with an arch smile. "Alice—Alice Layden!"

The next instant they were locked, in each other's arms. The hunters and myself drew back discreetly and allowed the lovers to enjoy this unexpected reunion.

Heron soon beckoned to me to join them, introduced me to the pretty Alice, and made known to me the explanation she had given him.

Their separation had been the result of an ingenious plot between Mr. Layden and Oliver Vander. Her father had never intended that she should marry Heron, but had been too politic to openly oppose their union, knowing that love always triumphs over persecution; but covertly he used every effort to persuade his daughter that his best to confirm this impression in her mind, and thus led her to entertain suspicions which led to the quarrel and estrangement. The announcement in the newspaper had been inserted by Oliver, without any foundation in truth; and when she saw it, she refused to hold any further acquaintance with him.

She strove in vain to ascertain whether Heron had come, the roving life he had adopted making it impossible to trace him; but when her father died and she was left in sole possession of his property, she determined to find the man who, she was now satisfied, possessed her heart.

It took her nearly a year to trace him. When she discovered that we had started across the plains, she engaged three hunters to accompany her, and followed in pursuit, thus affording her lover another opportunity to save her life.

The rest of the journey passed very pleasantly to all concerned. Alice and Heron accompanied me to New York, where they were married, and are now living. Although Heron considers that his hardships cost him five years of his life, yet he often refers with pleasure to his wild life as a hunter and guide among the mountains and on the plains.

A Trapper's Presentiment.

BY LEWIS GARDNER.

"WHAT'S b'lin' in that pate o' your'n now, Mort? You hain't spoke for the past half-hour!"

The speaker was one of a trio of trappers who, on their return toward Santa Fe, had camped for the night on a small plateau overlooking a deep canon. The one addressed was a young man, who was gazing toward a mountain range about five miles distant.

"I thought you think those Indians are camped over yonder?" was the Yankee-like reply.

"That's what I see, and what I jest about know it. But what of that?"

"I was thinking about the prisoner they had with them. Tell ye what, Hickley, 'twas a white girl! I'm sure of it!"

"Mout be; but more like 'twas a she-greaser they hed."

"You bet," spoke the other trapper, Wat Neelson. "One they swooped up from some out-o'-the-way ranche down the valley."

"I stood nearer than you to the party, remember, when they passed our place of concealment," was Mortimer Renfrew's reply. "I'll bet the price of our united packs 'twas a white girl."

"Oh, yer will, eh?" said Neelson. "Wal, how're ye gwine ter git at it, boss? That's the pint."

"Exactly. I'll tell you. By leaving our packs here and stealing a march on their camp! Tell you what 'tis, boys, I feel an interest in that prisoner, whoever she is, that I can't account for. And then we might get a chance to liberate her; who knows?"

"Ur ye a durned fool, Mort, say, ur ye?" asked Hickley, in a gruff voice. "I know now you're in earnest."

"Then you think the risk too great, do you?"

"Tew great! Huh! Talk of us three tryin' ter git a prisoner away from fifty Navajo Indians! I don't doubt such things has ben dun 'mong the eastern tribes; but the idea of tryin' it on 'mong a passel of Navajo hossmen on the war-trail! Ole Hickley's worked tew hard for the past tew months ter risk his skulp an' beaver on any sich undertakin'! That 'tis—plumb!"

"Bes' thing we kin dew's ter bunk down; 'cose afore this time ter-morrer I'm bound ter be in Santa Fe with these traps!" said Neelson.

But little more was said. Mort Renfrew, whatever his thoughts, relapsed into silence, and his companions were soon buried in slumber.

An hour passed, finding young Renfrew yet awake and somewhat excited. At length he rose to a sitting posture and glanced over his sleeping companions.

"It's strange," he mused. "I seem to see the face of that girl-prisoner, and can't get it out o' my mind. And to think she's at this very moment not more than five miles away—destined to be the mistress of a chief, or perhaps—sacrificed in some of their horrid rites! And yet these men are right—to undertake any thing for her—too wild, too wild!"

He lay down again, beside his companions. But sleep he could not. Flitting before his

mental vision was a wild, agonized face, with eyes imploring him for help. He had not been near enough to distinguish the features of the prisoner as she was hurried along; but now, in his excited imagination, he saw them as those of one he had long lost sight of, and hoped to forget.

"Good God!" he at last muttered, half-aloud, again rising up. "Is it a presentiment? Then why do those loved features, full of agony, present themselves as they have not before during three years? No—no—'tis impossible! It's all fancy—fancy of the worst kind, for it revives the old feeling which I, till now, thought buried forever!"

Glancing again over his sleeping comrades, he walked lightly away to where their horses were tethered in a deep thicket. He assured himself the animals were secure and then turned back; but do what he might, the picture of that face, white with fear, became more and more impressed on his mind.

"I'll go!" he muttered, at last; "go alone, to the Navajo camp, if I die for it! Something seems to urge me and I'll obey. If it be only a morbid fancy, I alone shall suffer for it. And, suppose I do die? who's there to mourn for me except these two rough, though noble-hearted, men. No—I won't wake them. They'd only oppose me, and I ought not to try to persuade them. Besides, if any thing can be done, one would be more apt to succeed than three."

He had, while thus musing, turned back to the side of his horse, which he now led noiselessly away, till he reached the stream running through the canon. Then mounting, he rode into the water and directed his course down-stream. After going a mile, he turned from the canon, and entered the heavy timber beyond. An hour longer, and he found himself at the edge of a narrow valley whose opposite side was overshadowed by rocky cliffs, a thousand feet high.

He halted in the deep gloom of the timber, and gazed intently northward. Half a mile away, the valley seemed to end in low cliffs, and huge boulders that had evidently tumbled down from the dizzy heights on his left. But he saw no sign, as yet, of the Navajo camp. Had the band passed on? They were certainly not on his side of the valley, else he would have detected them through the pale starlight.

But his searching eye soon distinguished an opening to the extreme north-west of the valley, leading, he doubted not, out of the mountains. Perhaps the Navajos were camped near the spot, tethering their horses in the cactus thicket which he made out, just beyond.

He saw that, by scouting up half a mile along the edge of the timber, he could turn to the left and gain a point of observation from the low cliffs and boulders. Securing his horse, he began to steal forward on foot, first seeing that his knife and revolvers were in their accustomed places.

It was a full half-hour before he gained the coveted position. Looking down, his eyes met a scene which thrilled him with excitement!

Thirty yards distant appeared a low, hastily-constructed tent, hitherto concealed from his view by groups of cactus. Around it the Navajo warriors lay rolled in their blankets, apparently buried in slumber!

"She is there!" muttered the young trapper. "The tent was erected to shield her from the cold air! These wretches value their prize. Now, what can be done?"

Well might he ask the question. The extreme danger and difficulty of his wild scheme were now realized as they had not been before. There was no way of approaching the tent except through the groups of sleeping warriors. The latter evidently had sunk to slumber without posting sentinels; feeling perfectly secure in this isolated spot. But, how slight a noise might arouse them! Suppose he were to succeed in gaining the tent unobserved. Would the prisoner be alone?

"I'll go on!" mused the young trapper, setting his teeth. "There's just a chance of my getting safe beside the tent, and, once there, I can soon determine the number within. As for the rest—God help me!"

With the softness and agility of a cat, he left his position, and began worming himself through the coarse grass toward the tent. But, he had not advanced five yards, when a dark figure arose near the tent, and glancing for a moment over the slumbering warriors, darted within! But, in the momentary pause made, the trapper saw that it was that of an Indian girl!

He lay close to the ground, not yet daring to move. Meantime wild speculations filled his mind as to the Indian girl's object. What meant her stealthy movements? Did she design to help the prisoner to escape? If so, what strange motive prompted her?

To advance further as yet would be useless; and in deep suspense he awaited developments.

Ten minutes passed, seeming an hour to the excited trapper. Then he saw the Indian girl cautiously emerge from the rude tent and glance anxiously around. Evidently satisfied that none of the warriors had moved, she made a gesture to someone behind, who began at once to follow her, both crawling on hand and knee toward the base of the low cliffs!

They crept on, in a line that would take them close to the lurking white. He marked their progress, almost holding his breath. At last they passed him, and having gained the cliffs, darted noiselessly up among the dwarfed shrubbery covering its sides!

The moment they disappeared, their silent watcher crept hurriedly after them. He had noted a circumstance which confirmed his theory in regard to the Indian girl. She had disguised the prisoner whom she was assisting to escape. Nevertheless, the trapper had penetrated sufficiently to know that the prisoner was white!

"It is she! Merciful God, I almost know it!" he almost uttered in his excitement. "That something which urged me upon this adventure—'twas a presentiment!"

With a silent prayer to God for success, he darted on to overtake and relieve the Indian girl of her self-imposed task.

He did not for a moment forget the necessity of extreme caution. He must not only overtake the two, but manage to make known his presence and object without alarming them.

He knew the Navajos spoke Spanish; and, in that tongue, doubted not to make himself understood by the Indian girl.

These thoughts suggested themselves with lightning rapidity. Not three minutes elapsed before he caught sight of the fugitives as they disappeared through a cleft in the rocks, which opened into the northern passage from the valley.

With cat-like bounds he followed, and in a moment darted through the cleft. But a

scene met his view which held him motionless with wonder and new fears!

A powerfully-built Indian warrior stood beside a horse about twenty feet distant, on the opposite side of the passage. And toward him, the Indian girl was partly leading, partly dragging, the startled prisoner!

The young trapper had just time to take in the scene when the warrior advanced, meeting the Indian girl and her receding charge!

"You have done well, Menoken!" said the warrior, softly, in good Spanish. "You see I am ready. Do you think your warriors suspect that the Apache chief, War Tongue, has followed them for three days?"

"No!" she said, "nor that Menoken, wife of a Navajo chief, fears a white rival. I might have killed the white squaw, but not without being suspected. The tokens—quick!"

"Here!" he answered, handing her an arrow and war-plume.

"It is well," she said. "Now go quick! Take the pale squaw where Big Paw can never see her again! With these Comanche tokens, he will believe some daring warrior of that tribe has stolen his prize!"

She turned away, leaving War Tongue grasping the arm of his prisoner, who glanced wildly after the retreating figure of Menoken. As the latter disappeared, the poor girl made a sudden spring, but was quickly secured by the Apache chief, who smothered the despairing scream that burst from her lips!

At that moment a figure clutched behind the Indian's fingers of steel clutched his throat, and a keen blade was buried to the hilt in his heart. A brief struggle and the wretch lay motionless before Mort Renfrew!

"Hist, girl!" said the latter, in an excited, though assuring voice, as he raised her from the ground. "It is a friend—you are saved—come on!"

The English voice reassured her at once, and she obeyed, hurrying with his assistance, through the narrow cleft. As they did so, a wild commotion was heard in the camp below.

"Thank Heaven!" whispered the trapper, as they halted for a moment. "The gallop of War Tongue's horse up the ravine at this time. The whole pack'll follow in that direction, and now's our time!"

They pressed on with little fear of being seen or heard; for already were the Navajos galloping in the contrary direction.

In a short time the daring trapper reached the spot where his faithful horse awaited him. But not the steed alone. Two crouching figures sprang up!

"Mort Renfrew! is it you?" cried the one.

"Hickley! Neelson!"

"Tis him, Wat; 'tis the cuss, an' he's done it!" cried the old man, joyfully, as he saw the panting figure in the young man's arms.

"Who?" gasped the girl. "That name! Is it Mortimer?"

"Yes, Clara Edson, for it is you, thank God!"

With a suppressed cry of joy she threw herself upon his breast.

"Oh, Mortimer, my prayers are answered!"

"For which I will ever thank God, who sent me a presentiment that a loved one was in danger," he said, holding her to his heart.

"Wal, Hickley," whispered Neelson.

"No more o' that—now—Mort—ole boy," said the other, with a suspicious tremor in his voice. "Take my horse, as I'll carry double. We must git out o' this in double quick!"

In an hour they passed their former camp, pressing on with all speed toward Santa Fe, some forty miles distant. At daylight they halted and breathed their animals, having heard no signs of pursuit. And then Clara Edson's story was told.

Her father, a wealthy St. Louis merchant, had been ruined in business, and, with his wife and child, came on to try his fortunes in the Far West. Two days out from El Paso, their train had been attacked by Indians; and, though they succeeded in beating the Navajos off, it was not till a number had been killed, and Clara taken prisoner. For nearly a week had she been in the hands of the Navajos.

Before noon the little party entered Santa Fe, where Clara found her parents, who were nearly distracted with grief. Their joy may be imagined.

Winifred Edson had no longer any scruples in permitting young Mortimer Renfrew to become his son-in-law; for the once proud and haughty merchant was now changed. The young couple were soon united in marriage, and in a few years returned to the city of their birth, rich, not only in worldly possessions, but in domestic love and happiness.

TO ADVERTISERS.

A few Advertisements will be inserted on this page at the rate of fifty cents per line, nonpareil measured.

BEADLE'S DIME

BASE-BALL PLAYER FOR 1871.

This edition comprises the New Rules and Averages, Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention, together with the Amended Rules Adopted, Rules for the Formation of Clubs, Instructions for Players, and the Base-ball Averages of 1870. Edited by Henry Chadwick.

The tenth annual edition of the Dime Base-Ball Player for 1871 will soon be published, and will prove to be the most accurate and reliable edition in the market, having for several years been the recognized organ of Base-Ball Clubs and Base-Ball Players throughout the country. Price Five Cents.

For sale by all news-vendors and booksellers; or sent, post-paid, to any address, on receipt of price. BEADLE AND COMPANY, 98 Wm. St., N. Y.

Illustrated Star Novels, No. 17.

TRUE AS STEEL;

OR,

THE FAITHFUL SISTER.

By NED BUNTLINE, will present a very fascinating romance by an author who never writes a poor thing. Read it and enjoy a treat! Price Fifteen Cts.

Frank Starr's American Novels, No. 59.

IRON HAND, THE TORY CHIEF.

By FRANK STARR. The characters of this volume are exceedingly well presented, and the entire story is full of action of an uncommon kind, which will render the reading thereof a source of delight. Price Ten Cents.

For sale by all news-vendors and booksellers; or sent, post-paid, to any address, on receipt of price. FRANK STARR & CO., 41 Platt St., N. Y.

FREE

Try samples of our great \$1 Weekly, "THE GAZETTE," Hallowell, Maine, 51-4-19-ly.

2,000 "VALUABLE RECEIPTS," sent post-paid, for 30 cents. Address, B. FOX & CO., Station A., New York.

MORAL AND PHYSICAL SUASION.

A pair of rays from the Vulgate of Webster.

BY ZOR JOT, JR.

Once on a time, an aged character
Of agricultural proclivities
Saw in the foliage of his apple tree
A youthful semblance of the future man
Staring the orifice in his contentment
With that most favorite fruit in infinite zeal.
That aged character his spectacles
Polished, and put upon his head's bald top.
And, casing both his wide observatories
On that young cider-mill up in the tree,
He said, "My dear young friend, it seems quite
Clear
That you had best come down out of that there."
The young chap answered and said unto him,
"I can not see it in that light, old hoss;
And that is what the matter is with Hannah,
Or words of similar purpose and intent;
While to his nose, nose he put his thumb,
And all his other fingers wagged at him.
Then went to laying in his winter's fruit.
The old man said, "Then I will fetch you down."
So up he threw at him and bits of grass,
Which made this young embodiment of mankind
Laugh, and chuck in more apples with a vim,
Not even stopping for the cores and stems.
Said the old man, "If neither words nor grass
Can have the power to soften you down, young man,
I'll try what solidier virtue is in stones!"
Then did he pelt him to his heart's content
With wretched stones, uncareful where they hit,
Until the sport got rather full of fun,
And that young man remorsefully came down!

Strange Stories.

THE TREE OF DEATH;

OR,

The Law of Java.

BY AGILE PENNE.

The full, round moon shone down brightly upon the private gardens of the emperor's palace, in the pleasant Isle of Java, far down in the southern seas.

The soft breezes of the night whispered through the hanging leaves, and the very air was redolent with the perfume of flowers.

In the midst of the rose-trees, stood the fairest flower that all the Isle of Java held—Leila, the daughter of Java's emperor, his only child.

Leila was tall and straight as the palm-tree, yet possessed of all the grace and lightness of the swaying vine. Eyes and hair black as jet, lips like the rose-leaf, and her skin was fairer than the pearls that adorned her neck.

Leila waited by the rose-trees. Why waited the daughter of the proud Emperor, Abdallah the Third, in the garden on that summer's night?

A step sounded amid the shrubbery of the garden.

Leila turned, more annoyed than alarmed. A manly figure approached.

The rich dress, the jewel-belted sash, the diamonds that sparkled in the young man's turban—for he was young—all told that he was a person of rank.

It was the Emir, Hassan, one of the highest nobles in the island, and allied by blood to the emperor.

"Leila!" he exclaimed in astonishment, on beholding her standing like a statue among the flowers.

Leila pouted in disdain but answered not.

"I thank my good stars that directed my feet hither," said the Emir, gallantly, approaching the girl. "Let me seize this opportunity to tell the Flower of Java's Isle how much she is loved."

Again Leila replied not, but turned away, disdainfully.

"Why do you turn from me?" he asked.

"Your father approves my suit."

"So does not my father's daughter!" exclaimed Leila, in clear, sweet tones.

"And why not?"

Leila made no answer, but plucked a rose from the bush and idly pulled it to pieces.

"You treat me as cruelly as you do that flower," he said, softly. "Shall I tell you why you will not love me?"

Leila looked at the Emir in astonishment.

"Because you love another?"

The girl blushed crimson.

"Let him beware! If he crosses my path, he looks upon his death!" Hassan said, fiercely.

"Find my lover; then speak your threats," replied the girl, scornfully. "For the present your company is distasteful to me. Shall I go, or will you?"

"Before many hours are over, you may regret your words!" Hassan said, angrily, and then stalked away amid the bushes.

Leila laughed, lowly but merrily, when his tall form was hidden by the foliage from her sight.

Hassan had not been gone five minutes, when Leila heard another step in the shrubbery. This time it came from the direction of the wall that surrounded the garden.

The tread was cautious, as though fearful of causing an alarm.

Leila listened with sparkling eyes, lips apart, and a heaving bosom; signs of joy—of love.

And then, a tall, lithe form, clad in the handsome uniform of the Emperor's Guard, came from the bushes.

Leila looked for an instant into an olive-tinted face, lit up by a pair of sparkling black eyes; a face wherein both honesty and courage were plainly written; and then, with a low cry of joy, gave herself into his arms.

The haughty daughter of Java's proud emperor loved a humble soldier, by name, Ben Liel.

"Light of my heart, once again I hold you in my arms!" the soldier cried, softly.

"Once again I can hear your heart beating against mine."

"The heart that beats for you alone!" said Leila, looking up fondly into the handsome face of the young soldier.

"And yet, when I think of the gulf that separates us, I am almost despairing. I hold you now to my breast; press your lips freely; I forget all in the joy of the moment. I remember only that you are the most beautiful of women, that your heart is mine, and that I love you better than I do life itself. But, when I am away from you, when my brain is calm, not whirling with passion's fires, then I remember that you are a princess, the daughter of my emperor, and that I am only a poor soldier with nothing in the world but a strong arm, a stout heart, and a sharp saber."

"With you, or away from you, I remember nothing but your love!" cried Leila, with deep passion. "Did you think of the emperor's daughter when in the jungle you threw yourself before the angry tiger and, at the risk of your own life, saved me from his jaws?"

"No, I only saw the woman that I loved—but whom I had never dared to tell my love—in danger."

"Then, when the brute lay before us, still in death, when your saber was covered with his blood, my attendants gone in horror, and none near to watch us, what did you do?"

"I caught you in my arms, told my love, and received a hundred kisses in reward. Again I forgot you were the princess, and remembered only that you were the woman that I loved!"

A rush of hasty feet, a gleaming of torches amid the rose-trees, and the lovers were surrounded by the emperor and the servants of the palace. Foremost in the throng came the Emir Hassan.

"By Allah! this is too much!" cried the emperor, in rage. "My daughter in the embrace of one of the captains of my guard. Tear them apart and give the slave to the bowstring!"

In an instant the saber of the soldier flashed in the moonlight, while still he held the girl proudly to his breast.

The servants fell back before the glittering steel. They had seen the good right arm of Ben Liel strike lustily on many a gory field. They cared not to taste the shrewd coldness of his blade.

"Let no man lay a finger upon me!" cried the soldier. "Your majesty buckled this saber on my thigh on the battle-field. If you demand it, it is yours."

"Be careful; this young captain is the idol of the soldiers; do nothing without reason," whispered an aged noble in the emperor's ears.

"Give up your sword," the emperor said.

The soldier cast it at his feet.

"You know that you have forfeited your life by being found within these gardens in conversation with my daughter; but, I will be merciful and give you a chance to save your forfeited life. Go to the Tree of Death; bring me a casket of the poisoned gum that flows from the tree and I will spare your life."

Leila started in joy.

"You hear, my beloved?" she whispered; "you are saved!"

The soldier smiled, grimly; he knew the nature of the task.

"I accept the offer, oh, emperor, but do not thank you as if for mercy, for I know the motive for your pardon," and Ben Liel laughed scornfully. "Farewell, angel of love!" he whispered to the girl; "if I do not return, keep my memory green in thy heart."

Within an hour after, the soldier, guarded by a column of picked troops, was on his way to the desert.

After two days' march, the party arrived at their destination.

They halted at the entrance to a rocky pass, walled in by huge cliffs, that a bird alone could climb.

"Beyond yonder point of rocks, you will find a lovely hut. In the hut is a man who will give you the iron casket and your instructions. We will wait for four and twenty hours," said the officer, in command of the troops.

"But, I may be longer."

"You are going to almost certain death; but three men have ever returned from the Tree of Death," replied the officer.

With a pale face, but an unshrinking heart, Ben Liel entered the valley.

He found the lone house and entered it. The keeper, a man with a withered face, a pale face, and the air of a corpse, rose to receive him.

The two looked at each other for a moment in astonishment, and then sprung into each other's arms.

They had served throughout a whole campaign together!

"You here?" cried Ben Liel.

"Yes, in a duel I killed the commander of my squadron. This is my punishment. What have you done?"

The young soldier related what had occurred.

"But tell me, what is this Tree of Death?" he asked.

"It is the deadly upas tree; the vapor that exhales from it is fatal to life, bird, beast or human, except when the wind blows from the north; then, one may venture to approach the tree through this ravine, but the risk is great, for the wind is fickle and apt to change. The task you have to do is to take this iron casket and fill it full of the gum that exudes from the trunk of the tree. It is used to poison the arrows of our soldiers, that they may do deadly execution."

"But, can I not tell how blows the wind here?"

"No; not until you reach the little valley in which the tree stands. The way there is plainly marked by the bones of those killed by this deadly vapor. You can see its effect on me. It has made me a living corpse; yet I am supposed to be far beyond its influence."

"Give me the casket and your hand," said the soldier. "I'll say farewell until we meet Allah above. I have little wish to live, for, even if I succeed in escaping from this Tree of Death, my Leila is lost to me,

forever, and what is life without the woman I love?"

"Nothing," said the other, slowly. Then for a moment he was silent in thought.

"Ben Liel," he said, suddenly, "do you remember the fight at Alcabad?"

"Yes."

"A huge trooper of the foe held me prostrate beneath his saber; you, at the risk of your own life, saved mine."

"It was but my duty."

"Life for life. I'll requite the service. I will go to the Tree of Death and procure the poison. The vapor will not act on me as on you. I am seasoned to it; besides, I am sick of life and wish to die. No words, if you love the man whose life you saved."

He seized the iron casket and ran from the hut.

In an hour he staggered in, and, falling, laid the casket at Ben Liel's feet.

"I am dying," he muttered; "the vapor has poisoned me, but you are saved! Nay, more; you have a weapon in your hand, by means of which you can make your enemies tremble. Bow your head, that I may whisper in your ear the Law of Java."

We will now return to the emperor's palace.

The troopers had waited four and twenty hours. Ben Liel had not returned, and so, thinking him dead, they returned and reported the fact.

The Princess Leila was crushed with sorrow.

Abdallah, the emperor, determined to wed her to Hassan at once.

Leila, motionless as a statue, said neither yes nor no.

The bridal party were gathered in the great chamber, when, suddenly, the ringing of a Javanese warrior sounded in the hall. His head and breast were covered with steel; the saber rattled on his thigh, and under his arm he bore an iron casket.

It was Ben Liel!

Leila uttered a cry of joy.

"I have done your mission, and there is the proof!" cried Ben Liel, dashing the casket down at the emperor's feet. "Now, then, I am a free man, and have the right to claim a boon. Is it not so?" he asked.

"It is," replied the emperor, turning slightly pale. "What will you have, a house and land or a golden reward?"

"I claim the hand of your daughter, Leila!" cried the soldier, firmly.

All within the hall started with amazement, and one old gray-haired noble slipped through the doorway, taking advantage of the confusion.

of the bolt was followed by a rush of cold air into the room, and the boy felt the presence of two men very near his bed. He tried to shriek, but his tongue seemed glued to the roof of his mouth, and his limbs were not under his control.

Slowly, heavy footsteps approached the frightened boy, and all at once a dazzling light burst from a dark-lantern. Raising his eyes he beheld two villainous-looking men standing at his bedside, and the next moment a monster hand was placed upon his shoulder.

"Boy," said the man, in a coarse voice, "git up, put on yer duds, and come with us."

Then the boy, with a mighty effort, broke the spell which bound him, and, looking into the large eyes of the bloated ruffian, asked:

"What for?"

"We'll tell ye arter while, p'r'aps," was the reply. "But, come; do as we tell ye. Ye shall not be harmed."

The little fellow rose and hastily donned his garments. Then the burliest of the twain threw his overcoat over him, whom he raised in his arms, and in silence the party glided from the room.

Once out of the tenement, the robbers darted down a gloomy alley with their prey, who soon found himself alone in an underground apartment.

He immediately sunk upon his knees and gave vent to a flood of tears. The incarnation of darkness encompassed him, and not a sound was borne to his ears. At last he dried his tears, and, with deep thinking, discovered the true motive which led to his abduction.

A fortnight prior to the scenes related above, an old man was assassinated on one of the quietest thoroughfares of the city. The assassin thought that not an eye save his own, had witnessed the deadly blow. But he was mistaken. Rollo Judson, an orphaned newsboy, was a witness to the diabolical deed. He described the murderer to the police, and the villain was soon apprehended. He stoutly denied the crime charged against him, and many people believed that, at the proper time, he would prove an *alibi*. The State relied upon the testimony of the little newsboy for conviction, and never dreamed that the prisoner's associates in crime would abduct him.

But the villains did, as the reader has seen. It was their intention to keep the boy-witness in duress until, with perjury in an open court, they set their friend at liberty.



THE BOY-WITNESS.

"This is madness!" cried the emperor, deadly pale.

"It is not madness!" replied the soldier.

"I have brought a casket of poison from the Tree of Death. For that act I am entitled to a free pardon, and the right to ask one favor at your hands, which you are bound to grant. It is the Law of Java! Call your wise judges! I demand nothing but justice! Refuse me and five hundred swords without will leap from their scabbards at my bidding. Emperor though you are, yet you can not break the Javanese law!" Clear as a clarion's note rung his bold defiance.

The gray-headed noble returned in haste.

The guards without are in revolt," he whispered in Abdallah's ear; "the soldier has the law on his side; refuse him, and your throne is lost!"

The emperor changed his tone.

"Ben Liel, you are right; my daughter is yours! Woe to him who breaks the Law of Java!"

And thus the soldier won his love; and when, in after years, the scepter fell from Abdallah's feeble hand, boldly the soldier clutched it, and reigned as emperor over the Isle of Java.

The Boy-Witness.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

'Twas the "witching hour of night, when churchyards yawn," and the blackness of darkness filled a small room on the first floor of a decaying tenement. Nothing disturbed the ghastly silence save the regular breathing of a sleeping person, and a rat gnawing, as if for dear life, beneath the low bed.

All at once there was a noise at the door. The rat deserted his feast and sought his hole, and the occupant of the couch awoke, and sat bolt upright.

For a long while he listened with throbbing heart to the strange noise, which went on without a second's cessation.

"What can it be?" he at last asked himself, in a frightened, childish whisper. "Robbers? what do I possess that men covet? nothing, if it be not the few pennies I have made selling the *Herald*. Hark! somebody is sawing a piece out of the door to get at the bolt. Oh, what shall I do?" and the little newsboy trembled from head to foot.

Too frightened to act, he remained motionless, listening to the noise of the saw. Suddenly it ceased altogether, the removal

When morning dawned the little prisoner heard a door open directly above him, and bread and water were lowered into the cellar.

Three days quickly passed away, and the murderer's trial was very near at hand. It was known over the entire city that the newsboy was missing, and for him shrewd detectives searched in vain.

During this time the little fellow was not idle. In the gloomiest corner of the cellar he had found a heavy rusty knife, with which he had removed quite a good portion of the wall, and was tunneling for freedom.

He knew that Wash Gibbart's trial was near at hand, and he wanted to send old gray-beard's murderer to the gallows. He toiled as never prisoner had toiled before him; and at last he pronounced his tunnel completed. A few blows with the heavy old knife would break the crust that separated him from freedom, and one night he left his dark prison never to return.

"Stop your infernal noise, boys!" shouted a dangerous-looking man, springing upon a card-table in one of the lowest gambling dens in the great metropolis. "Can't you be still a moment? Hark! hark! I say. Somebody's knocking for admittance."

The last sentence brought quietude to the men, and every ear was saluted by a series of sepulchral sounds which seemed to emanate from beneath their feet.

"Somebody's under the house! He's knocking against the floor; may be he wants to handle the paste-boards to-night. Come, boys, and let him in. My word for it, he's one of us."

The gambler sprang from the table, seized a strong poker which lay near, and loosened a board. Then several comrades flew to his assistance, a portion of the floor was ripped up in a second, and Rollo Judson was dragged from his tunnel, half-dead with fright, for none other than murderous visages greeted his vision.

"Who are you?" Where'd you come from?" "What were you doing under this house?" and similar interrogatives were hurled upon the boy-witness, as he trembled with fear in the midst of the shameless set.

Suddenly a burly and beetle-browed ruffian darted forward.

"Say, that's my chap!" he yelled, grasping Rollo's arm. "That is, I've been keeping 'im for some time."

"Drop that arm, Wal Ravens," cried the gambler, who had taken the initiatory step in releasing Rollo.

"When I git ready!" was the response.

"We'll see," and a dirk flashed in the gas-light. "I recognize this little chap. It's Rollo Judson, and many's the paper he's sold me. And he's the boy what can hang Wash Gibbart, and by heaven he shall do it. Drop that arm! I'll not tell you again!"

Instead of obeying the command, the Titan whom Rollo had recognized as one of his abductors, thrust his hand into an inner pocket, and was drawing a revolver, when the other sprung forward and buried the dirk in his breast.

Then ensued a scene that baffles description. The friends of both parties closed in a brutal combat, in which dirks and pistols were used with deadly effect.

Taking advantage of the confusion, the boy-witness glided from the den, and hurried home as fast as fear and his limbs could carry him.

The following day Wash Gibbart's trial opened. Everybody was surprised to see the missing boy stalk into the court-room. The murderer fainting at the sight of him. In claxon tones the little fellow told the story of his abduction and thrilling escape, and identified Gibbart as the murderer of the old citizen.

The villain swung for his crime, and the boy-witness is a newsboy still.

Beat Time's Notes.

WARTS belong to the same order as toad stools and mushrooms, and are no more useful than ornamental, and they are neither.

When I was a boy, I used to have a whole handful of them. They used to come and go—especially come; they were all fine large ones, too, and I thought a great deal of them—a great deal indeed; but I looked upon them with an eye single to their eternal destruction, and tried every thing, from counting them over just after I got to sleep, to spreading them out in the sun and minding my mother for three consecutive days, but every thing failed except the warts. At length a fellow who was going around with a patent steam stump-puller, took the contract and pulled the warts.

Bolls are offshoots of the volcano family; they come out when and wherever they make up their minds to do so, and they can make it inconvenient. At certain stages they blossom, but they are not good until they are ripe, and then they are as mean as a stingy neighbor with no conscience at all. If they would come out nowhere but on your boot-heel, it would be better, and if they didn't hurt, how much more easily could they be borne! The one I had when I was sixteen years old I sat on and ruined.

HASHTEEN is a different kind of hash from the common article of die-at. The dreams and visions it produces are not so apt to be graced by your great-grandfather.

THE man who is always "begging to infer," etc., must certainly be an infernal fellow.

WHEN you write your name on the back of another man's note, "sacred to the memory of?" is always understood.

THE main beauty of the baking-powder which I have invented is that bread can be made with it without flour; you may doubt this statement, but if you would see it perform what I say with your own eyes, you couldn't doubt it a moment, not a moment. A groceryman who sells it says it is so powerful that it made all his prices rise. A farmer says it makes his boys rise early; and often (so volatile it is) it has been known to raise the lowest spirits up to ninety-five per cent above proof. It raised a rebel ram in Charleston harbor, and it raises sheep. It is used by the Erie employees to raise their wages. It razed a French fortress, and a remarkably small quantity of it has been known to "raise thunder." If you can raise no objections and a quarter, send for a box. It is handy as a divorce in the house.

I KNOW a fellow who should be made to take out a manufacturer's license, for he manufactures so many lies.

A YOUNG man sitting by his girl, with whom he was quarreling, remarked petulantly that she was nothing. She said she wouldn't admit that, but she would say that she was next to nothing.

IN writing for the Press, use short words, and in speaking to your wife, use—well, you mustn't use short words, either.

IT is poor praise, at best, to say of a lawyer that he cleared all of his clients.

BLOOD will flow if you are struck with a blood-geon.

TO the gentleman who persuaded some of my chickens to go off with him, and who was inconsiderate enough not to send them back, I have a few timely words to say. Do you remember that the seventh commandment says, "Thou shalt not steal chickens," and don't you know that a man who will steal chickens is absolutely mean enough to—eat them? I should think you ought to know this. Why, my dear sir, if every body was like you, honest men would have no chickens at all, so they wouldn't! I regret exceedingly that you let your appetite run so far—that is, allowed it to run into a man's chicken-coop in that abstract and abstracting kind of manner. Don't think for a minute that because I don't go to you and thrash you, that I know who you are. Don't think so at all. I would like very much to cultivate your acquaintance, and the next time you call I will try to be at home. You probably may not observe me up at the back window with a two-barreled shot-gun; I say you may not see me, but you may see a flash, and miss some flesh, for you will discover that there is a hole through you larger than yourself. This fact will probably startle you a little at the time, and you will lose your presence of mind, and the absence of the biggest part of your body will be a little overwhelming to sit down and think seriously about, for there won't be one part of your body left big enough to carry the other part home; in fact, you will have no remains for your friends to lament over, and your funeral expenses won't be heavy in consequence, and therefore won't trouble your mind much. I hate to have to spoil your appetite in this wholesale manner, but, my friend, chickens are chickens, and I am but human.

Watchfully yours,

BEAT TIME.